





HEART AND HOME TRUTHS,

BEING

Self-Musings upon the Divine Will.

BY

REV. R. WHITTINGHAM, JR.

“Ecclesia est corpus vivum, in qua est anima et corpus. Anima, significat interna dona Spiritus Sancti; corpus vero, externam fidei professionem, et sacramentorum communionem.”

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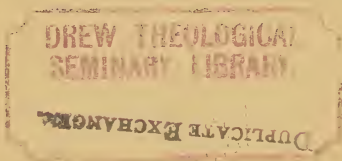
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To the Memory
OF A MOTHER PRECIOUS TO HIM,
AS THE SOURCE
OF ALMOST EVERY EARTHLY GOOD,
THIS VOLUME IS DEDICATED,
BY HER LOVING SON.

“ And hardly do we guess aright at things which are upon earth, and with labor do we find the things which are before us: but the things which are in Heaven, who hath searched out? And Thy counsel who hath known, except Thou give wisdom, and send Thy Holy Spirit from above? For so the ways of them which lived on the earth were reformed, and men were taught the things that are pleasing unto Thee, and were saved through wisdom.”

Wisdom, x., 16, 17, 18.

P R E F A C E .

THE purpose and design of this volume will need explanation. The position which it may assume, and the claims which it may assert, are evidently uncertain. Is it for instruction or amusement? Does it seek to teach or entertain? Is it argumentative or dictative? Much depends upon this point being satisfactorily cleared up, in order to settle the question of the value of the volume.

I would then, dear reader, answer these questions by saying, that it is neither, solely—and either, as may be. If the process of thought wrought out in these pages should carry conviction with it, then it is most satisfactorily argumentative; if not, it does not seek to assert,

uphold, or maintain. Blame not the volume for its weakness, inasmuch as it does not profess to be strong. So too, if the mode in which the thoughts are presented, be sufficiently attractive to draw the eye and mind from page to page, then is it satisfactorily entertaining; if not, still it has not failed of all its purpose. Blame not the volume for its dulness, inasmuch as it does not profess to amuse.

But if, to the mind seriously anxious to know how truth may bless its Heart and Home—wishing to see how light *can* shine upon all the confused relations, and fierce contradiction so rife around it—seeking calm, not contention; simple outlinings of God's will, and not controversy concerning it; if, to such, these pages are lacking in either interest or instruction; then they fail indeed in their design, and the fault rests with them. Blame, then, this volume, for its weakness and short coming, in setting forward the pure and beautiful truth of God, the only true hope of the real happiness of the Home!

That truth can alone be the support of what has been written. If these pages shall be of any benefit to those for whom they are intended, it must come alone from the benediction of that SPIRIT without whom nothing is strong, nothing holy; and to that SPIRIT with the FATHER and the SON, be all the glory and the praise.



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I.

HEART TRUTHS.



HEART AND HOME TRUTHS.

SOLILOQUY I.

DOUBT.

I AM sitting by the open window. It is the close of a warm autumn evening. The brown glow of the sunset glory has all faded out of the western horizon. The only remnant of past beauty, is that silvery whiteness which seems to ripple over the blue serene of the deepening vault of heaven; concentrating to a line of distinct light, against the dark brow of the opposite hill. The soft silence of nature comes up upon my heart, and the mighty repose of the works of God makes an echo of silence in my breast.

In this waning light, a fair view lies spread out before me. My eye rests upon a picturesque valley, threaded by a silvery winding stream. It is bounded by high and half-clothed hills, down whose shaggy sides the darkness is now creeping in stealthy but sure advances. Rural sounds alone float upon the still repose; rural sights alone steal

upon the eye. It is the harmony of Nature, making music in my heart, and reverberating in full diapason the commendation of the Maker, as first given—"Very good!"

As I gaze outward, and breathe the bracing autumn air, wafting on my cheek like a messenger of health and strength, the shadows fall yet more densely upon valley and upon hill. Darkness begins to settle down, indeed, until an uncertain line of dusky blue alone distinguishes the brow of the opposite hill, and an occasional broken shimmer in the depth of the valley, betrays the existence of the rippling stream lying at my feet. One by one, red sparks of light twinkle out from scattered cottages, glowing and brightening in the gloom—catching the eye with a heavy glance of sullen splendor—of the earth, earthy. Soon, these shine out alone upon my eye; and thick and heavy upon the bosom of earth is wrapped her night-mantle of darkness; over all, spread her covering of repose. How still! how calm! how suggestive of the eternity of God! What a reminder of the Omnipotent Father!

So, when I look upon earth. This the emotion, as I peer through the darkness, and think of the mighty, rushing world upon which I stand; and which, beneath my gaze, so still, so calm, is working out the Father's will! This world, utterly regardless of the specks of mortality upon its surface, so tremendously manifesting its mute submission to the omnipotent law. Strange, to think that that law is simply His WILL! Most strange, to think that the

whole motive power to this gigantic progression, is solely the action of that Divine mind! Solely the operation of that almighty will in Him, who said, "Let it be so; and it was so."*

Therefore it is that in this thick darkness, and in the very sound of silence, I think I hear the rushing of this rolling globe. As I listen to the beating of my heart, I fancy that I detect the moving steps of that obedient servant of the Almighty, the unconscious earth, fulfilling His pleasure. Oh! then, how vividly comes before me the insignificance of my personal existence, the littleness of my own dust-begotten career! How painfully is pressed upon my heart the vastness of that universe, to which I am as nothing—and the infinite, boundless majesty of Him, to whom even that is less than nothing! How agonizingly anxious is the emotion filling my bewildered mind, as I look upward toward that Great Divine, and remember the cry, "Oh! earth—earth—earth—hear the Word of the Lord!"†

How my soul goes forth toward that Great Divine; and, as the heavy tears of a pain-freighted humility crowd to my eyes, I look with eager gaze into the deep vault of heaven. There, I behold blazing firmament, shining worlds, rejoicing stars, in the illimitable space; and I think of Him, who is "God over all, blessed for evermore," and bow my head and worship. Then, again, my

* Gen., i. 7.

† Jerem., xxii. 29.

thoughts revert to earth. I ponder upon the mystery of a Revealed Will—a God made flesh—a dying source of life—a crucified yet risen LORD—a covenant of mercy—a promise of eternal life; and I find the marvels of the heavens are all eclipsed. If wonder filled my soul before, how is it now overwhelmed in amazement deep and high; and with the Apostle, I exclaim aloud, in words piercing on the heavy night, “Oh! the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!”*

Are they past finding out? That is the question which I put to myself, after a moment’s pause. I do not mean, in their fullness. Of course, I feel *that* is a mere mockery to attempt. But am I left, poor, feeble mortal, in a moral darkness greater than this night upon which I look, only to wonder and be amazed? Can it be, that disclosure of my Maker’s wisdom and His will are only, like the flashing planets upon which I gaze, to render deeper the gloom which hangs below? Must it be, that, while I wonder and adore, that knowledge gives me nothing more! Oh! my heart—no! I cannot, indeed, by searching, find out God; but sure I am that, some way, I may come closer to Himself; and, while the revelation of His Mercy and His will are both to me unfathomable, there *is*—(I feel it—know it)—there *is* a way by which I can “know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus CHRIST, whom Thou hast sent.”†

* Rom., xl. 33.

† St. John, xvii. 3.

And yet, what do I see in the moral and spiritual world, as I glance around? What do I find of such knowledge, among my fellow men? Alas! if this revealed will—this communicated wisdom of our God—does convey a knowledge of Him, intended to disperse the gloom of ignorance, why can I not behold its power? Among so many millions who receive that Word, what indications do I find of nearness unto Him, or union with that mind Divine? Dissension, difference, strife, contradiction, mark all their views; and contradiction and disagreement are the common results of reference to His Holy Word. Is there any guide? Can some man teach me? Is all around my soul as dark as now around my body? Is all a false, delusive glow? and that revealed will as confused a mystery to my mind, as the firmament in marvellous wonder to my thoughts?

My heart aches. I am confused. I long after God. My soul doth thirst for Him. The greatness of His glory has come up upon my soul, and I long to adore. Yet, alas! as it was with Abraham at the evening time, a thick darkness falls upon me, and a horror. Temptation assails me, and I shudder to feel a doubt. *Is there a God at all?* Can that be true which yields no truth? If that Revelation is God's, indeed, must it not be for light? Yet, I behold darkness. I *know* my indignant brain refuses to do aught but declare that conflicting and contradictory creeds cannot be *all* in the right. *All*

cannot be true to unravel the mysteries of God. The whirl and the strife of the almost numberless phantasies built upon that Holy Word is, *must be*, wrong—darkness deepened—gloom thickened—night blackened. This is all they do for searching out my God; and as I look upon them I sigh, and exclaim, “Blind leaders of the blind! What shall I do among so many?”

Stay! What is that? Oh, beautiful! Oh, bright! Clear across the throbbing sky, I see a flashing meteor shine! With an almost audible rush, it has described its track from one side this valley’s limit to the other. It put out the stars. It dimly lighted up hill and dale. I saw something by its brief power; but it went out and perished, and the scene is darker than before. Is that an emblem of my thoughts? It might appear so. A most fit resemblance of those different creeds upon which I was meditating. Just so wild, uncertain, brief. They give a little light a little while. They clear up some mystery surrounding that Eternal Mind, in their own color, for a *season*; and then leave the mental eye darker than before, when they are extinguished. Even so the mind, which, having sought to explore the mystery of the Eternal Throne by that ephemeral light, has seen it perish, and so come into the utter darkness of unbelief and scorn.

Let it not be so with me, O my God! Oh! Thou far, far removed, and yet most nigh, leave me not thus alone!

Up through the still, dark night, I lift my heart unto Thee; and, as I trace Thy hand in all those quivering worlds, I long, in blind wonder, after Thee. My spirit feels after Thee, not far from every one of us. Shed light upon my mental darkness. Give me the understanding of Thy Holy Word. I believe that Word to be the revelation of Thyself. What, then, is its true light? How can I be brought near and united unto Thee, finding the mystery of Redemption sealed, in the pledge of my eternal life.

Is that an answer to my prayer! Far over the distant woodland hill there comes a pure, soft, swelling light. I see distinctly each separate clump of trees standing darkly out against the glow; while sharp and bold, each rise and fall of the hill is relieved. How mellow and rich is that creamy light! It is increasing fast. I discern the outline of the valley. The cottage tapers dim. The white dwellings begin to be distinguished. Steady, sure, rapid, is the progress of that glow. Now, I see a golden disk looming up from behind the hill; and bright, beautiful, glorious, the full—no, almost full—moon appears. Now, valley, shine! Now, bubbling stream, sparkle as with a thousand diamonds! Now, cottage, tree, hill, field, reflect those soft, bright rays, for darkness is all fled away.

Oh! thou creature of my God, emblem of the truth, may I learn from thee! Creation of the Father's hand, be thou an emblem of the Father's will. *Divine* art thou,

as the work of His creative hand; *constant* art thou, in the unfailing performance of His pleasure. *One* art thou, in the persistent reproduction of the same phases which He first appointed as thy law of good. Let me find this the test of Thy truth, as given by our God—a witness of Him, one, constant and divine.

Oh! can I find this in the mental world? May I discover there, such a testimony to the Revealed Will of God, shedding a like light upon the mystery of that Word. Is there any such guide of Truth reflecting the light of the Sun of Righteousness, and pouring upon the darkness of the soul, just such a sufficing flood of glory, drawn from Him who is the Way, Truth and Life?"*

Be this my earnest search! O moon! I must leave thee now; but each night will I come beneath thy beams, to study out this image. Throwing aside the claims of conflicting creeds, as *theirs*, I will seek heart-truth under the characteristics which must be hers—the TRUTH—one, constant, and Divine.

* John, xiv. 6.

SOLILOQUY II.

TRUTH.

I AM beforehand to-night. The moon is not yet risen, and yet I hear the factory bell ring out half-past seven. Never mind, I can wait, it will not be long. It is one blessed fact that the works of God are sure, very sure. Whatever is His, really His, will not disappoint us. We may rely upon it confidently. All that is Divine is unchangeable and persistent, so long as His will appoints it. I know that the bright-faced moon will come to-night, because it is the work of God. Till she comes, let me reflect and take up what I left last night, the earnest searching of the Truth of God—the guide of our understanding in the Revealed Word.

Truth—well, after all, it is only a term. I may call this true and that true; style this Truth, or that Truth, but it will not make it so. I must reach its reality—and so what is Truth?

By-the-by, that was the question of Pilate. He once asked, at a fearful hour, “What is Truth?”* Poor man,

* St. John, xviii. 38.

I doubt not he was in darkness, and wholly perplexed. I can well imagine how utterly bewildered he was, between the lofty claims of his prisoner, and the blood-thirsty accusations of that prisoner's enemies. His heart goes with the prisoner, his necessity with the prisoner's enemies. It was a most unfortunate position to learn the Truth. A divided heart can seldom see clearly. It had been better to have doubted both, and questioned each. The result of that division in heart was, that when he had asked the question, he "straightway went out;"* left the only One who could have answered it, who was Himself "the Way, Truth, and Life;" and turned to the enemies who knew nothing. Neither does he satisfy them when he comes there, for all he can say to them is the unwelcome declaration, "I find no fault in Him."†

Poor heart-divided Pilate, I pity you, and the hundreds of whom you are type; "ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the Truth."‡ Alas! how many they are, who, with divided heart, ask the same question—what is Truth? and yet, because their desires go one way and their convictions another, turn resolutely away from the teachings of God's Word, and listen not to its answer. This I would seek to avoid for myself. Let me be willing to bow submissively to all that can bring the marks of Truth, which is of God.

* St. John, xviii. 38.

† Ibid.

‡ 2 Timothy, iii. 7.

It has often surprised me, that the great majority of persons, whatever be their religious professions, remain so heedless of this momentous question. I find a great many who embrace guides for the understanding of the Divine will, simply upon the ground of their personal preferences. A man prefers such a system of religious faith, and then embraces it. Another prefers an opposite, and embraces it. Now, which is right? I cannot tell, for both may be very sincere in their preferences. And yet it is as plain to me, looking at them both from a mediate point, that one or other *must be wrong*. They are contradictory. I should say both are wrong. In the understanding of religious Truth, preference can have but little power; the question—what is Truth? must be asked and answered in a different way from Pilate's interrogatory.

But there comes the bright, beautiful moon! True to the everlasting covenant, she warns me against these desultory thoughts. I am to ponder over that of which she is the type—the bright, ever-burning Truth of God; and with humble beseeching of His spirit, learn from His Word that Truth which may be my guide to eternal life.

Let me consider. I had advanced something in the question last night, for I had learned by the emblem of that bright planet, that Truth must be One, Constant, and Divine—is this so?

1st, I say it must be DIVINE, that is, *the* nature, as well

as of the nature of God. In the book of Deuteronomy, I know the Almighty is spoken of as being a "rock, His work perfect, His way judgment, and the God of Truth."* So that wherever there is Truth, there is something Divine, resembling and partaking of the nature of God, a portion of His all-providing Spirit, in harmony with Him; and on the other hand, whatever is lacking in Truth is deficient in that—harmony, nature, and spirit. It is foreign to His counsel—opposed to His will. From this I infer, that the first position characteristic of Truth, is its Divine nature.

Now if God be the God of Truth, and Truth of every kind in harmony with Him, I can clearly see that the first point is a necessary one, that is, the *unity* of its nature; oneness in a complete, unbroken consistency. For, if Truth be indeed Divine, it must, like Him, be unchangeable, the same in every place, and upon all occasions. Such is the nature of God, as the Prophet Malachi says, "I am the LORD, I change not."† There is no change in the Almighty for this very cause, that he is the God of Truth, and it is that Truth which preserves the unity of the Divine nature. Evidently, then, if the unity of His nature is dependent upon the attribute of Truth, what I am to understand by this term, must be essentially unchangeable as rendering Him so. From this I conclude, that whatever is Truth now, must always

* Deuteronomy, xxxii. 4.

† Malachi, iii. 6.

have been so, and must ever continue so, in all positions, under all circumstances. It must possess unity with itself. There can be no such thing as Truth and difference combined. If two things are true of the *same nature* and the *same subject*, they must agree with each other. Does it follow that they must necessarily be alike? No—I cannot see this. By no means. The more I think of it, the more distinct it becomes that *resemblance* is not necessary. The form may depend upon circumstances; the reality alone must be in agreement. That is to say, that although they may not in manifestation resemble each other, they cannot contradict or run contrary to each other. There must be unity of reality between them.

Now comes the other feature that presented itself to me; that is, the Constancy of Truth. But what do I mean by constancy? I think I know how many would call it, and by a less lenient name—Intolerance. Ah! thou ugly painted fiend! Intolerance, eldest daughter of bitter bigotry, own sister to red-eyed cruelty, can it be that thou hast any relation to the Truth? So I know many would term my third characteristic, and for my constancy, they would maliciously read intolerance. But I deny it. I confess there is a connection, but only such as lies in the base prostitution of a just emotion—the Devil's tempering of a Heavenly weapon. By constant, I mean *unyielding and unbending*; the bold and firm resistance to untruth; and antagonism to error and falsehood. Nor do

I see how I can avoid this conclusion if my first thoughts were right. If Truth (bright-eyed maid!) be indeed Divine, and One, she must, of necessity, be constant in her opposition to the untrue. She must be irreconcilable with, and opposed to, that which is false. Whatever is true in such sense, cannot fail to be antagonistic to all that is false, even as I remember the Apostle St. John saith, "I have not written unto you because ye know not the Truth; but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the Truth." *

Now let me ponder this a moment before I go further, or approach the Word of God. Let me see what I have settled upon:—Three characteristics of Truth, as general and wide spreading necessities. I am satisfied that Truth, and anything that is true, must be of Divine character, *i. e.*, be agreeable to God's Truth; must be Constant in its testimony, *i. e.*, the same through all time, agreeing with itself; must be Persistent in its bearing, *i. e.*, denying and opposing all that is false. From all which I conclude, that any doctrine or system of religion, designed to throw light upon the word of God, must present clearly and unmistakably these characteristics.

Now, let me turn to that Holy Word—that awful record of Divine condescension. Can I gain any light upon those topics which last night so confused me? I hope so. I

* 1 John, ii. 21.

know now how I may test the Truth, and that may be my guide.

The first thing which strikes me, as I look at the word of Truth, is the remarkable fact, that in it, the Gospel scheme is called by this title, "the Truth." So the Redeemer Himself declares, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life;"* and St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Galatians, spoke the same language, when he prayed that "*the Truth* of the Gospel might continue with them."† To the same effect was his lamentation, "when I saw that they walked not according to the Truth."‡ And I remember well that beautiful passage of the beloved disciple, "And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and Truth."§ There is, therefore, evidently a claim set up for the Gospel scheme, that it is the Truth of God, and in some way a manifestation of Truth.

A good idea now occurs to me. Here I may find a double test. I can now try the justness of my characteristics. I see that the Gospel scheme claims to be the Truth of God, the communicated Truth of Himself. As I believe the sacred volume to be indeed the Word of God, I am of course prepared to accept this; and so, if my characteristics of Truth are just, I shall find them borne

* St. John, xiv. 6.

† Gal. ii. 5.

‡ Gal. ii. 14.

§ St. John, i. 14.

out by the Gospel scheme. Then, on the other hand, if I am not satisfied of the Divine character of the Bible, in itself considered, I can see whether it is proved true by my before-settled characteristics of Truth.

I can readily find proof of its Divine character, for the language of our LORD Himself is explicit, "I came not of myself, but I came forth from the Father,"* "as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do; O righteous Father, the world hath not known Thee, but I have known Thee; and these have known that Thou hast sent me."† So that even were I inclined to side with those unhappy ones who deny the Divinity of our LORD, I should be compelled to admit the Divine character of His mission, and thus recognise the first characteristic of its Truth. So also is it Constant or united Truth; for a thousand years before His coming, it was the assertion, "A prophet shall the LORD thy GOD raise up unto thee, like unto me; Him shall ye hear."‡ And seven hundred years before, Isaiah declared, "I am a just God, the Saviour, there is none beside me; look unto me and be ye saved all the ends of the earth, for I am God, and none else."§ And when that promised Saviour appeared, He also asserted, "He that believeth in me shall never die."|| After He had ascended into Heaven, and returned unto the Father, His apostles preached—"Neither is there salva-

* St. John, xvi. 28.

† St. John, xvii. 25.

‡ Deut. xvii. 15.

§ Isaiah, xlv. 21, 22.

|| St. John, ii. 26.

tion in any other, for there is none other name given among men, whereby we may be saved.”* “Believe in the LORD JESUS CHRIST and thou shalt be saved.”† At the present day still the testimony of that Gospel is, “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our LORD JESUS CHRIST.”‡ Most assuredly then, this is an unchangeable Truth, running through all ages the same.

In like manner I find that the Gospel Truth was, and is, inflexible—resistant of error and falsehood. “He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned,” § Jesus himself declared; and very much like this is St. John’s language, “He that believeth on Him is not condemned; but he that believeth not, is condemned already.”|| And again, “That they might be damned, who believeth not the Truth.” ¶

I am satisfied then. I can see it clearly, and find it proved satisfactorily. My tests are correct, and they prove the Gospel, or the Gospel proves them, whichever way we choose to take it. What a beautiful system, too, I begin to perceive in this light of the Word of God! I see now that the *sacrifice of Christ*, (which is the foundation of the Gospel scheme,) who was the Way, Truth, and Life, is really the Truth of God, and a plan which only God the true could have devised or carried on. And in that awful

* Acts, iv. 12.

† Acts, xvi. 31.

‡ Rom. v. 1.

§ Mark, xvi. 16.

|| St. John, iii. 18.

¶ Thes. ii. 12.

mystery, which last night seemed so hidden and dark to me, God-made-flesh—the Almighty Lord condescending to earth, suffering and dying here, an atonement for the sins of the world—yes, all this I see now as the *one* great Truth of God; that miracle of mercy, by which His Truth is preserved, and in which, as the Psalmist says, “Mercy and Truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other.”* Oh! glorious, transcendent wisdom of God! By this one great sacrifice His Truth is established, because by it are harmonized all the apparently conflicting attributes of His person. By it I see God proved holy and just, hating sin and punishing it; and yet at the same time justifying sinners, and pardoning offenders. By it, I behold all the declarations of God’s anger and wrath against the wicked, fulfilled; and yet the operation of all His words of love and pity taking effect in each of those, who are covered with the mantle of His Son’s righteousness. Justly, then, may I look on this as the one great Truth of God, the only manifestation of His Truth vouchsafed to man.

But this Truth was *manifested* once only in the middle point of the world’s history, at that time when, as the apostle saith, “the Word became flesh and tabernacled among us.”† Then it was revealed as the great will of God, His way for the salvation of a ruined world. Upon this Truth God established His Covenants with mankind, for of course

* Psalm, lxxxv. 10.

† S. John, i. 11.

all His Covenants have only this foundation, His sacred Truth. Otherwise they were worthless. Therefore all His Covenants were based upon the sacrifice of CHRIST, as the Truth of God, evidently set forth. And now, when I think of this, I can see another point. There is a beautifully simple reason why that sacrifice of CHRIST was constituted at the middle point of the world's history, as being the basis of both the Covenants, before and after, even in their diverse, or rather developed, natures. By this means each Covenant, either anticipatively or retrospectively, drew upon that Truth of God for all its benefit; and each leaned only upon the atonement of JESUS as the sole manifested Truth of the Father.

But after all, what good does this do? Here, this last hour, I have been sitting thinking, and turning over these sacred topics, and yet have not reached anything connected with myself—anything to fix the wavering doubt I felt last night, in looking at the distracted and divided state of Christendom respecting Truth. The soft moon I see has crept steadily on, until she is pouring down a full flood of light upon the whole landscape. Have I gained any such mental illumination? Alas! no. To be sure, I have settled in my own mind some great principles concerning the will of God, that are interesting, to say the least. I had perhaps never before realized so fully, that the only Truth of God which we can know, is that sacrifice of CHRIST; and that to that we must ever turn as the only

true source of salvation. However, what has this to do with myself? How does it bring me near to God? How will it reach the thirst of my spirit after Him? What I want is something which shall show me a true and clear path in heart-approaches to my God. I know the religionist will tell me—"It is clear, you see CHRIST as the only means of salvation, as the Truth; believe on Him, and you shall be saved."* How easily said! Believe on Him! Have I not believed? Do not hundreds believe with me, that CHRIST is very God, and the only source of salvation, and yet *are* they saved? That is the question. I would like to see *how* they are saved—because I would like to know *how* they believed. Is it thought, credit, trust? No, no. *That* belief never saved. I would know what belief *is* first, to clear my way. Sure I am, no man-fancy will ever gain me that great Truth—no plan of my own ever procure for me the union after which I pant.

Then was this truth of God established for any purpose, or none? Oh! surely I cannot look back on that blood-stained cross—see the God-man suffer the awful anguishes of death—hear the expiring groan, "It is finished,"† and yet ask such a question even to myself! No: so tremendous a sacrifice was made, only that the Truth of God should be established with mankind, as a *source* of *salvation*. One and all. Each and every. If that was the design, there must have been a *way*. Here came to my

* Acts xvi. 31.

† S. John xix. 30.

mind the Covenants. I thought of them before. What can I understand in the Covenants? Were not they the channels through which the benefits of that Truth, CHRIST's sacrifice, were conveyed to man? Ah! this may be light! Let me repeat it to myself again, and take it in. The truth of God, preserved and manifested in the LAMB slain to take away the sins of the world, was simply a declaration of love and mercy; and yet a love and mercy, not unconditional, because it was opposed by God's hatred of sin. It therefore became a Truth upon which to base a Covenant with man, by which, and in keeping of which, the benefits of that Truth were to be personally conveyed.

This does bring it nearer to myself, and if I can make clear what are the characters of these Covenants, I may see more distinctly how I, in my own personality, may approach the Divine, and read a simple decision of the contradictory teaching of different creeds. Can I then remember any passage of God's Word, calculated to clear up this point, and show me the nature of these Covenants? They must be true, if the conveyances of Truth, and bear its characteristics. Yes, this suggests a passage to me—"The Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the Truth."* Ah! that is clear, very clear. What a comfortable, solid passage that is, to my mind, with all the figures of strength! The "pillar and ground." Now that brings to my mind's eye some solid masonry erecting itself

* 1 Timothy iii. 15.

high and firm above the struggle and roar of conflicting waves ; an image of peace and strength amid dissolution and confusion. This the Church is said to be ; the pillar and ground of the Truth. It must be then the Covenant means of that Truth, and the Church must become the pillar by which it is supported, the ground upon which it is built. I see then that the Church is the Covenant in which God confirms His Truth, and by which the blessings of that one great Truth, the sacrifice of CHRIST, are extended unto all men. For this cause it is termed the pillar and ground, as being the sure and unchangeable instrument by which that great Truth may be given unto men ; and the forgiveness of sins, and the pledge of eternal life, as its fruit, received. Another passage which comes to my mind makes this more clear—"CHRIST loved the Church, and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it,"* where I see the sacrifice of CHRIST (which is the Truth of God) is spoken of as being the property or possession of the Church. And then there is another passage which I recollect, stronger yet, and giving me more light still at this point. St. Paul says, that he by his preaching was to make "all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery"—(that mystery of godliness, I remember he elsewhere speaks of as being "God manifest in the flesh")—"which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by JESUS CHRIST, to the intent

* Eph. v. 25, 26.

that now . . might be known *by the Church* the manifold wisdom of God.”* That is as positive as it is plain. My Covenant is now clear. That Covenant is in the Church, to which, and in which, the Truth of God, promising forgiveness of sins by a crucified Redeemer, is pledged unto men.

All this summed up, then, will be, that I have arrived at the conclusion that the Truth of God is wrought out in the sacrifice of CHRIST; and that He gave His Son to be this sacrifice, as the basis and bond of a new Covenant, (as He had been of an old,) joining then to Him those whom, in that Covenant state of salvation, He calls His Church—His Spouse—His Body; and because in it He communicates so great a blessing as the Truth of God, pledging forgiveness of sins and eternal life; therefore the Church is declared to be the pillar and ground of that Truth. The *pillar*, by which the knowledge of CHRIST is established; the *ground*, upon which the hope of eternal life is built.

The Church! Well! I have obtained a name at least, but what beside? What is the Church, in which I may attain to the covenanted state, and through which my heart may lay hold upon the sure Truth of God? How may I know it? The Church! Why, I can name almost as many Churches as there are places of worship—contending, disagreeing, and contradicting. How may I dis-

* Eph. iii. 9, 10.

cover which is the Church of CHRIST? All cannot be true. Must I not here come to as great a stand as at the first, respecting disagreement upon religious Truth? No—hardly; for I have touched some solid ground. I am satisfied of one great Truth of God, by which man may be saved; and I have also learned how to test the true. I may therefore steadily proceed, and sifting Truth from error, by the just tests, discover whether there be any—and if any, where—the CHURCH OF GOD.

But, not now. Not to-night. I am weary of these very thoughts. My head is hot, and my brain tired. It is also growing late, I perceive. The moon, my beautiful mistress, looks down upon this peaceful valley, while she rides high in Heaven, as upon a lofty throne, and proclaims advancing night. No: I will rather let the topic rest for the present, to take up another day. Let me be satisfied with what I have attained so far, and hope more light for the future. Blessed comfort it is to think that there is a pillar of safety to which I may cling—a ground of Truth upon which I may stand. Shine on, then, O moon, because of the word of Truth which hath established thee: and may that Truth be mine.

SOLILOQUY III.

TRUTH LOCATED.

I MAY wait a long time to-night, if I look for the moon. Plash!—plash! How the rain comes down! The air, that was so mild the other day, is now biting cold, and I am right glad to be able to keep it out. How it sighs and moans round my dwelling! Poor moon! it will be behind a dark veil that you rise to-night; and how cheerless and profitless will seem your journey, as you spend your light and brightness only upon dark, envious clouds, shutting out the bosom of earth. I, for one, shall miss you, for to you I owe no insignificant benefit in the suggestions of truth which you have given me.

And yet, after all, I do not know but that there is a strong resemblance between the night upon which I look, and the state of things in the moral world, into which I gaze. The moon will shine behind these clouds, and all the storm and riot will not one jot affect her placid glow. It may be hard to make out where she is; very difficult to understand her position; yet I know

that she is there ; and, by the general light diffused, she somewhat brightening in even the sullen clouds, her *effect* is perceived. So it is in the moral, or, rather, spiritual world. Confusion, storm, strife, darkness, and doubt, seem to fill its boundaries. Truth cannot be discovered at a glance ; nor even with a steady gaze would we believe it there. Yet, we may know that it *is* there. Sure as the Word of God, behind the dark veil of clouds, the Truth, and the Church of God as the pillar of that Truth, does shine. It may be difficult to discover ; but if we seek, we shall find. Whatever light and brightness we see, in those dark clouds of error, is only the reflection of her Truth, who shines afar, and is a proof of her existence. Yes, I will accept this night as an emblem, and, acting upon its suggestions, earnestly endeavor to locate that Truth which I discovered last night.

Now, this is one thing I know at the outset—I can make nothing by searching among the clouds which now encompass me. To seek among the numerous creeds which to-day stare me in the face, for the Truth, is—well, it *is absurd*. Suppose I look for the moon to-night, and endeavor to find her position behind this mass of floating vapor, I shall be deceived and lost in a few moments. Every little break in the maze will mislead me ; every accidental and more than ordinary brightness, cause me to err. So it will be with the Truth. Any beauty striking my mental eye in this creed, will lead

me to cry, "It is there!" while any excellence manifested in another creed, will lead me to cry, "It is there!" I will do in the moral world as I would do in the natural—take the experience of a past clear and cloudless night; and, by the position she held then, know how and where to find the moon to-night. I will go to the past. I will begin at the cloudless time. I will seek the Truth in the first Covenant, the Church of God, when there were no contentions against the Truth. By what it was then I will seek it now.

That there was such a time, I was satisfied last night. I then came to see that the sacrifice of CHRIST, and His atoning blood, were the one great Truth of God, manifest and set forth once, in the fullness of time, at the middle point of the world's history; and that the Church of God signified His Covenants founded upon that *Truth*. These I then saw were two—the anterior and posterior Covenants; both deriving all their efficacy from that one Truth; their only benefits referring to that Saviour's blood.

The fact of the existence of such covenants does not trouble me. I never had a doubt of it. It is the common consent of Christendom. Ever since the fall of man, (according to the Revealed Word), there has been a company, or fellowship of the servants of God, with whom He covenanted, upon the basis of that sacred Truth. This body, or company, was, therefore, what

I understand by the Church of God—a position of covenanted favor with Him.

Now, I further know, (without any great effort of memory), that sacred History informs me of a series of progressions in this Truth; and that, both before and after the Great Sacrifice, it has been susceptible of extension and increase in marked stages. These I set down as Patriarchal, National, and Universal. If I am to locate the Truth now, I must search these closely and watch them narrowly, to see if they each stand the tests I have resolved upon as the characteristics of Truth.

The Patriarchal Church, or Covenant upon the Truth, was, at the first, the selection of one family to be the recipients of His Truth, and who might claim in that way the prospective benefits of the sacrifice of Christ. To these, God made known the conditions of His Covenant, in those appointed acts of obedience which were to become the conveyances, by type, of the promised boon. Thus I find the earliest institutions in existence, as sacraments or solemn signs, on the one hand, of what God demanded; on the other, of what man received. These rites or sacraments were two—Sacrifice and Circumcision; which were the signs of the Divine Covenant upon the Truth, and pledges of safety and eternal inheritance. Sacrifice was, (whatever its origin), in a sacramental act, the shedding of blood, as an acknowledg-

ment that sin deserved death, and that the Great Sacrifice to come could alone save the sinner from that death. Circumcision was the sign of a separation and severance of the people of God from the people of the world, and the evidence of their acceptance into His family. So with Abraham, God declared that His Covenant, ratified by these two Sacraments, should be an enduring one; and that all who entered upon these rites, in true faith of His promise, should claim the promised salvation, which was to be obtained through the atoning Lamb.

Now the question is, was this Patriarchal Covenant what it professes? Can I prove it one, continuous, and divine in its teaching? Was it not the outgrowth of a superstition natural to ruder ages, or the uprising of a mummary only a degree removed from barbarous idolatry?

To this I cannot accede. I am compelled to reject such a theory, if I do not desire to reject the Word of God. This Covenant appointment was *divine*, for God Himself gave the terms. He spake unto Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, with a mighty hand and a stretched-out arm, appointing both sacrifice and circumcision as the tokens of His purposed Covenant. It was *one* with the Great Truth of CHRIST's atonement for sin; inasmuch as all the benefits in it were drawn only from the expected coming of One, whom God promised as the seed of the woman to bruise the serpent's head; and circumcision

and sacrifice only availed for the satisfaction of sin, by their being, as the Apostle says, "figures of the True."* It was also *Continuous* in its opposition to error or falsehood; for the only promises which it held out were to those who, by these sacraments, were in covenant with God, and obedient to His commandments—"This do, and thou shalt live;"† exactly as its threatenings ran—"Keep the charge of the LORD, that ye die not." "And if it shall be, if thou do at all forget the LORD thy God—I testify against you this day, that ye shall surely perish."‡ "The uncircumcised child, that soul shall surely be cut off from His people."§

Convinced of this, if I now proceed to trace the course of time, and the progress of events, I find myself approaching a second era of that Truth—the *national* development of the Church, or Covenant upon it. The natural increase of single families led to the necessary formation of a more extended means of cementing in visible polity the multitude of the faithful. Hence the appointment of a separate priesthood in the Mosaic Covenant; as God said to Moses, "Ye shall be a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation."|| Before this period, the father of each family was the acting priest of all his dependents, and ministered for and to his family the appointed sacraments. This was, most assuredly, the

* Heb., lx. 24.

† St. Luke, x. 28.

‡ Deut., viii. 9.

§ Gen., xvii. 14.

|| Exod., xix. 6.

cause of the greater continuity of the parental relation in the early ages, and the dependency of many separate families upon the one first parent, so long as he lived. How beautiful, too, was this honor and respect! With what a sanctity it endued the parental office! I wonder if that sanctity is as utterly gone and departed as we in these latter days compute it to be? Is "Ichabod" so entirely written upon the honor due to that once revered relation? I *feel* as if it were not. Still, I am wandering from my topic. Suffice it for me now, that then it *was* so. But, as these families became a nation, it required more time and care to perform the various duties, and, with an appointed ritual in connexion with them, it was necessary that some should be set apart for the special purpose of ministering in these sacred emblems of the Covenant. For this cause was appointed one tribe of the nation, who were to be the priests of the people, and to devote themselves especially to the sustaining and carrying on God's Covenant with that people. Thus came in the Mosaic ritual, with its full enactments of vivid figures, bold types and foreshadowings of the Truth to come; with its institution of a race of priests who ministered in that Covenant; and who, through the channels of circumcision and sacrifice, conveyed to all the chosen people of God, the blessings of that one great atonement for sins, the LAMB OF GOD.

Here again I must apply my tests—the characteristics

of Truth. Was this progression *Divine*? Most assuredly, unless I have been mistaken in tracing its history. All the appointments of the Mosaic ritual were the result of the direct command of God. The institution of the priesthood—the arrangement of the tabernacle—the order of sacred ceremonies—the promulgation of the Commandments of the Law, were all received as the mouth of the LORD had spoken it; and as *His* will and law, divine in their origin. Were they, however, *united*? Did not the new institutions of the National Covenant contradict, or disagree with, the Patriarchal? Not at all, when I examine them closely; for the apparent change was no alteration. Still, as ever, circumcision and sacrifice were the two important and leading signs of the Covenant with God, and the salvation which was to come by its Truth. They still continued the symbols of the true. The priesthood, although no longer continuing in the natural descent of father to son, was still a successive descent in the same office of father and son, in an appointed tribe, and therefore at unity with the past. Was it, however, *Continuous* as well as *united*? As the Jewish Church became thus widened in its course, and ramified in its operation, I can easily conceive how the force and strictness of adherence to the Truth practicable in the family government, should become almost obliterated. Was it not so? No—I know it was not; for I recollect well that glorious passage of the Jewish history, when the faithful Joshua, at his last hour,

so nobly vindicated the honor of God, and declared with no mealy-mouthed phrase, the awful solemnity of that theocracy under which they lived—his language was, “Ye cannot serve the LORD, for He is a holy God, He will not forgive your transgressions and your sins, in forsaking the LORD and serving strange gods; for then will He turn and do you hurt, and consume you.”* And as regards the legal bearing of that service, I remember, “Any male among you that remaineth uncircumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people.”†

Above a thousand years thus existed the Church and Covenant of God. Patriarchs and prophets, priests and kings, saints and sages, in that Holy Covenant found safety and salvation. By faith, looking forward unto the Truth of God, even although they may not have fully realized what was to be the manifestation of that Truth and love, they yet were accepted in the Beloved. What a magnificent vista of the past opens before me as I look at this period! What a gorgeous procession of glowing characters fills my eye! I think I can even distinguish among the host, the peculiarity attaching to the man after God’s own heart—the regal type of more regal anti-type; even he accepting deliverance only through that Holy Covenant, the promise of the LORD, unto his LORD.

At length, when the “fullness of time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the

* Josh. xxiv. 19, 20.

† Gen. xvii. 14.

Law, to redeem them that were under the Law.”* Then arrived the period of the third and final progression of the sacred Truth; and after the death and sacrifice of CHRIST, at that middle point of the Church’s existence, it was changed in its character and appearance.

For now in the consummated death and atonement of JESUS, GOD’S Truth was made manifest, and upon it a new Covenant was to be based. The Church, from having been carnal and fleshly in its types of CHRIST, was to become spiritual and heavenly in its retrotypes. The Covenant, built upon the Truth, having been before in temporal conditions, was to be made spiritual. And yet this change was no alteration, for JESUS Himself declared, “I come not to destroy the Law or the Prophets, but to fulfill,”† *i. e.*, to complete, perfect, accomplish them; and when the Church, as the pillar and ground of the Truth, passing through the patriarchal and national grades, reached the Catholic or Universal, it only attained the full measure of the Divine Will.

Here it is, that I must apply my final test. The Church, as completed and established in the Messiah, will it exhibit Divinity, Unity, and Continuity? Can that new phase be true as the past? Yes; for I see in the Author of the new Covenant, Him who was “the very Truth and Life;” and in “JESUS the Mediator of the new Covenant,”‡ “God manifest in the flesh”§—God over all blessed for evermore.

* Gal. iv. 4 † Matthew v. 17. ‡ Heb. ix. 15. § 1 Tim. iii.

Its origin was therefore as fully Divine as that of the first Covenant. It is also in perfect unity with the ever-existing Truth. To the minutest particular, the spiritual Covenant of the Church of CHRIST is the perfecting of the temporal Covenant and in harmony with it, as the Jewish Church. For, still was CHRIST given as the only source of salvation ; in the new Covenant as in the old, JESUS, the LAMB offered up for the sins of the world, was the only foundation. So also, as in the earlier existence of the Church, two sacred signs were instituted as the pledges of the Truth, and as the means of drawing the benefits of JESUS' blood, were circumcision and sacrifice ; in like manner, in the spiritual Covenant, were two sacred signs and pledges of the blessings of salvation continued :—spiritual circumcision and spiritual sacrifice. Baptism the one, Holy Communion the other. Through these as appointed means, still to be drawn from CHRIST, the assurance of pardon and the promise of grace. The priesthood, too, which had in the national Church been enlarged to a whole tribe, in the descent of natural parent and natural successor, was changed to a priesthood of spiritual descent, without limit of tribe, but conveyed from spiritual father to spiritual son ; and still appointed by that Divine Head to offer the spiritual sacrifices, and give the sign of the bloodless circumcision of the heart. Therefore I can see, that the closer I look, the more evident becomes the unity of the Covenants and test of their Truth. Not a rite or cere-

mony of any real value in the national Church, but was completed in spiritual character, in the universal Church; a Church no more to be confined to one nation, but to be a Covenant offered to all mankind, of every nation, people, kindred, tongue; as a means whereby they may embrace the Truth, which is salvation through CHRIST, the LAMB of God, taking away the sins of the world. Nor do I find this fail in the last test. It would not be surprising, indeed, when so great was the enlargement of the Covenant, that laxity should creep into its position of doctrine; but instead of this, I find the cry is yet, "This is the way, walk ye in it."* The promises are not unconditional, or unrestricted. I hear the terms of the Church of CHRIST as positively asserted as a thousand years before in the Church. "He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; he that believeth not, shall be damned."† "Unless ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, ye have no life in you."‡

Here let me pause for breath and cooler thought. How heatedly I have tracked out this line of thought! It has had the zest of a strange search. I have only, however, trod upon ground with which I am familiar. It is nothing debatable or uncertain. It is no argumentative course—it has been a simple process of inductive reasoning. I may with this rest satisfied, and for the remainder take a more convenient season.

Isa. xxx. 20.

† Mark xvi. 16.

‡ John vi. 53.

SOLILOQUY IV.

NATURE OF THE CHURCH.

A DELICATE subject of inquiry I am to propose to myself to-night, truly! Quite a hair-splitting point for nicer feelings! Most truly glad am I that no dear friends are near to be interested in the debate, or a curious effect might be elicited. As a controversy with myself, it may answer. I shall not probably hurt my own feelings, or if I do, will most likely bear patiently the unkind thrust. A man never intentionally wounded his own pride to any great extent; *unintentionally* he often may do it. If I prove myself to be deeply in error, so far, I can very quietly resolve upon a change of action, and let it end there. But, suppose friend A were here, or friend B, or friend C, it would be a cruel cut to endeavor to demonstrate to them, that *they* had been utterly mistaken in their notions—that a Church or Covenant, upon the Truth, was unknown to them. And yet what should I do? Friend A is a mild, easy-going adherent of the Universalist Church—friend B a stern and unyielding member of the Baptist Church—friend C a white-hot denunciator of ultra-Calvinistic views, brought to a focus under some hydro-oxygenic

spiritual blow-pipe system, and a member of the Presbyterian Church to boot. I fancy myself pursuing my inquiry with them by my side! What short corners to turn! What huge stretches of the mantle of charity, first to one side, and then to the other! No, I am glad I sit quietly by myself, in all the sincerity of an unshackled heart, that I may follow Truth wherever it leads; look boldly in its face, under any guise, until I discover the likeness to the Divine, not fearing to reject anything that *is false*, for fear it should be false.

Let me then proceed on my way. I wish to examine the *Nature* of the Church. By the Church I have settled that I must always understand the Covenant made with sinners, based upon the Truth of God's mercy, and propitiation for the sins of the world. It is called the Body of CHRIST, because into that Covenant all *must* be brought who are to receive the pledge of eternal life, and when so brought into covenant, they are united to CHRIST, and made His own, by which means they escape the punishment of eternal death. The covenant state, then, whereby sinners are adopted into the family of God—this pledged condition of salvation, through the atonement of CHRIST, is the position of those who make up the company of the Church of God, the Body of CHRIST, the vine, of which He is the root, and they the branches. I feel it necessary to repeat this to myself, more earnestly, because I do not desire to be led to any unnecessary admissions on limiting

the Nature of the Church. I wish, therefore, to have clearly and positively before my mind, what I understand by the Church as a distinctive title, ere I search into her nature. So far, then, I am located. Thus understood, the Church of God is the pillar and ground of the Truth, as the Covenant upon the sacrifice; and the outward signs and tokens of this Covenant are found in spiritual circumcision and sacrifice, *i. e.* Baptism and the Supper of the LORD.

Now, for the nature of this Covenant, its operation to the personal and actual uniting of the *soul* to God; the *individual* salvation by His grace, in and through it, as its power, capacity, and purpose; this, my heart hovers round, tremblingly. Here is where I most keenly feel the need of light. Can I find any Truth in this? Can I see any such nature in any Covenant, church, or system, as will be sustained by the characteristics of Truth, and yet, evidently effective to bring *me* into spiritual union with my God? Ah! that is worth answering!

Come down here from thy shelf, precious volume, sacred Word! Does the revelation of God give no information upon so momentous a point? I could almost think it did not, if I were to judge by the experience of others. I seldom see others examining its pages, to discover what they declare respecting the Truth; they seem to embrace what they like, and then declare it true, because *they like it*. And yet, there is floating in my mind the recollection of

a passage which may set me aright, concerning the nature of the Church. It is an Epistle; yes, one of the learned Apostle Paul's Epistles. Writing to the Colossians he says: (respecting some erring members of the Church), "not holding the Head, from which the whole body, by joints and bands, having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God."* What does he mean by "body," is the first thought? If I look back, perhaps I may discover. Yes, it is explained in a chapter before, where I see it is written, "and He (the Son of God) is the Head of the Body, the Church, who is the first born from the dead."† It is, therefore, simply a figurative expression, and by it I am to understand, that this Body, the Church, is dependent upon JESUS as its Head, and from Him it draws its nourishment, the Truth of God. By "joints and bands," it is partaker of all the blessings derivable from its Head, and those who make up its Body are connected, by this nature of union, with the Head, JESUS, for the attainment of spiritual and eternal life. Just as St. John saith, "In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.‡"

Hence arises to my mind a simple division of the question, and the nature of the Church resolves itself into that of Body and Spirit. I will look at them closely in turn.

1st. The Body of the Church. This has partially represented itself before. It is the great company of reasona-

* Col. ii. 19.

† Col. i. 18.

‡ John i. 4.

ble beings, on earth, kept together by the operation of the Spirit of God, the Creator of the world, and who are banded together for the purpose of receiving from Him, in a free gift, eternal life ; as the fulfillment of God's Truth, in His first promise, and manifested as such Truth, in the atonement of CHRIST.

This company of faithful people, willing to receive His Covenant, He makes His kingdom and His family ; and to them He conveys through the Head of that family, even CHRIST, spiritual and eternal life, as the Redeemer Himself declared, "I am the bread of life ; he that cometh to Me shall never hunger, and he that believeth in Me shall never thirst."* From Him the whole Body is nourished and fed. By Him, as the Head, the Body exists, and from Him alone can come all its Life, Truth and Knowledge.

Now, if all this be true, (and it is in the sure Word of God,) in the spiritual Body, world, or kingdom, we must, of course, find a *Unity* with God's operation in His other kingdoms. If this be not so, I must have been somewhere mistaken. The tests of Truth are unalterable. If we, who seek salvation by the Church of God, cannot find unity between her claims and nature, and the known nature of other kingdoms of God's creation, she must be false. I must, therefore, if the Church be really a spiritual kingdom, find her to be in unity with the nature of all other kingdoms of God.

* John vi. 35.

What do I see then, as the characteristics of the animal kingdom? In it, how does the sovereign Power convey life? *Order and Harmony* are the grand characteristics of its evolution of life. The exact, minute, and perfect adaptation of each part to the other, is evident. The complete dependency of the various members, each upon the other, and the unity of the whole, in order to the conveyance and the sustenance of life, is very observable. In each Body there is system, order, law, subordination and rule. Thus the Head, as the source of the will, commands the various members, and they act only in reference to it; and yet they mutually support each other, in their individual operation, for the sustenance of life, according to an *inflexible law*. In the vital system, for the preservation of the being, the blood-vessels, at the extremity of the circulation, in connection with the lesser arteries, and they in turn with the greater—each with each—are dependent one upon the other. And yet all these are effectual to life only by their receiving from the distant heart the stream of life, which they convey in subordinate turn and degree, according to a fixed and unalterable law: the violation of which law, is always death. How beautiful and mysterious is all this system! How perfect its order; how unvaried its law, and how complete its harmony!

In the vegetable world I find the same. Order and system mark out all its existence. Not a flower that blossoms, not a tree that bears, but shows us the harmonious

order of the Divine Head, if we will have the humility to learn it. Law and relation are operative in all. From the root, deep in earth, springs the stem, drawing from that as its source the nourishment, which in its turn conveys the same to the off-shooting branches. These again, through a thousand channels, to the smaller limbs and tender leaves, convey the life-sustaining sap. These also, performing their part by their semi-respiring action, in connection with the afforded nutriment, go on to develop bud, blossom and fruit, each after his kind. Thus unitedly and orderly they perform their various functions, and have their life—or, to speak more correctly, have their connection with God as the source of life—gaining that state and condition which, in our ignorance of its integrity, we call life. *If this system is broken*, and that plan to which He has been pleased to attach the working of His power be deranged, life languishes and fails. Let the diseased heart hesitate and falter in its pulsation, and lo! the clogged veins, the chilled arteries, the benumbed flesh, the failing breath, tell of the cessation of that wondrous principle which God ordained to be only in His order. Let the broken stem drop and fall on earth, and lo! the enfeebled branches, the flaccid leaves, the discolored foliage, will tell of departing vitality, as the penalty of a violation of God's law of order, and system of harmonious combination.

But I must not content myself with the lower developments. Let me glance at the moral world as well as the

natural, and what shall I find there? To every family by a natural law (as we call it) God has ordained one parent to be the head, the author of the life as well as the ruler and guide of the existence of those beings dependent upon his love and care. From him they derive their several positions, as also their peculiar offices, as children, servants, dependents, friends; and in the true preservation of this order and system can alone be found that happiness or comfort constituting the true life of the moral world. The body of the family cannot exist in any verity unless this order and harmony be preserved. There need be no doubt in my mind respecting this. Alas! I have seen too many unhappy families, too many shattered homes—too many desolate hearths, made such only from want of this proper subordination of system, not to see clearly that the moral world attests the invariable and inflexible Truth of order, harmony and system, as a means of life, or connection with the Divine Will of existence.

I am therefore already prepared, by this process of induction, to discover, in the highest grade of God's kingdoms, the same indications as in the lower; and I expect to find in it Unity with the rest of God's creation. I must. There can be no choice. The rigid rules of Truth which I have laid down constrain me. There can be no contradiction in the Divine. There must be unity—in *fact*, if not in appearance. If the natural body and the moral body receive their true existence only in organic law, in

an unalterable system of government, the spiritual world or Body must be the same. Can I imagine that the Almighty Creator will pursue a different plan of operation from all other in it, and give life there in a totally different manner? If I do, I shall be most grievously mistaken, according to the testimony of the Word; for the passage I hold in my hand, and which led me to this train of thought, gives the very figure of the natural body for the explanation of the spiritual. The Apostle in it does not speak of spiritual existence as some peculiar and separate individual life, begotten in a doubtful way, continued in an insecure channel. Oh, no! it is in unity with all else of God's creation, and carried on in harmonious system and order. Let me read that passage again—"The Head, from whom the whole body by joints and bands, having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God." Then CHRIST, the Truth, is also the Life. He is the root of the vine, the Head of the Body. Alone from Him, and through Him, can spiritual life be bestowed upon His Body—the faithful, for whom He died. Therefore from Him, as the Head, through two sacred channels, are conveyed, to all the members of His Body, the blessed principle of spiritual life—*i. e.*, forgiveness of sins and help of His grace. To administer these sacred signs of the Covenant, and also as offices of that body, branches of that head, or trunk: are given, His ministers and representatives, who are to "feed

the Church of God"* with the spiritual nourishment afforded through these sacraments. Through these channels are conveyed to each and all of His members spiritual life, received in them by a lively *faith*, embraced by an active *love*, and bringing forth the fruit of all holy living.

In looking upon it as a whole, therefore, I perceive that the Body of the Church is made up of THE TRUTH or Word, which is CHRIST crucified for the sins of the world. The MINISTRY, who are the proclaimers of that Truth, and who are appointed to make known the "mysteries of God as His stewards ;"† the SACRAMENTS, by which the members of that Body are grafted into it, and through which the ministers and stewards of GOD's mysteries so receive and feed them; the SERVICES, or celebration of those Holy Sacraments, accompanied by prayers and praise, as a spiritual sacrifice and offering unto GOD. All these, connected and tied by the joints and bands of believing and loving hearts, make up that Body of whom CHRIST is the Head, and which Body, according to the harmonious order of GOD's laws, is appointed for the support of spiritual life, and pledge of eternal existence.

Very glad am I that I determined to make this clear to my mind before I viewed anything else. I now most distinctly see the Truth of GOD in the external Body of His Church. I see the harmonious appointment of order and law, as the conveyance of life throughout creation. I

* Acts xx. 28.

† Corinth. iv. 1.

believe I thoroughly understand the Body of the Church, and see how really and truly a man can be united to CHRIST. The anxious longing of my soul is within grasp. I *do* see how Truth may become even *my own*. And yet is this all I may learn? Is this the whole of spiritual life? No. I have only considered the Body of the Church; the form, order and government in its necessary constitution I must now reflect upon the Spirit.

2d. What, then, is the Spirit of the Church?

CHRIST (I must never forget as first and above all) is the Head of the Church, and from Him alone of course that Body must be supported. All this harmony, order and system; appointed sacraments, divine ministry, solemn services; are designed and given simply for the purpose of keeping up (as they convey) the union of the soul of each member with CHRIST—to secure to it the blessings of His atonement, *i. e.*, the presence of the Comforter, and the forgiveness of sins. In this way is preserved the mysterious principle of spiritual life, which is *soul-union* with God. Thus is conveyed the forgiveness of sins received through a devout faith, and thus the presence of the Holy Ghost is embraced by a burning love. By which means, all the various members are one with the Head, CHRIST, who dwells in them with that fullness with which he “fillet all in all.”* I see then in the Ministry, the instruments by which men are grafted into the Body of CHRIST. The one

* Eph i. 23.

Sacrament of Baptism administered by them (the “circumcision made without hands,”* as the Apostle calls it,) being the means by which mankind may be “buried with CHRIST,”† and “rise with him through faith of the operation of God,” and by which they are born into the family of God, and put into a new Covenant with Him. The other Sacrament, the spiritual sacrifice of the Lord’s Supper, becomes the means through which the life begun in Baptism, together with all its high privileges and holy duties, may be carried on. By the celebration of that Holy Mystery, in memory of the only True Sacrifice, the believer receives, through the channel of bread and wine, the Covenant pledge of the remission of sins, the cleansing of body and soul by the body and blood of CHRIST, and also divine grace to support the soul and nourish it up to everlasting life. In this way, regularly and in beautiful order, is received from CHRIST Himself all spiritual existence, and by the operation of a true faith in the heart, the soul is made one with Him—by the action of a devout love in the soul, it “dwells in Him and He in it.”‡ The Spirit of God, therefore, in the Church, acts upon the soul and body of every member of the same, and becomes in them the perfected faith and love by which they receive divine life according to the appointed order.

With this, then, for the present, I may remain satisfied. I will not press the matter farther to-night. I am content

* Col. ii, 11.

† Col. ii. 12.

‡ 1 John iv. 6.

to see this much of the Truth of God, as clearly as I now see it. I have gained, in this examination, some feelings and thoughts new in their application. I have often heard, and heard with satisfaction too, friends of my own express themselves to the effect, that they do not see the necessity of uniting with any Church; that, meaning to do their duty, they hope thus to be saved. This I thought reasonable. It struck me favorably. If their minds did not see the necessity of attaching themselves to any special society, and if they tried to do their duty, that seemed to me to be abundant ground for hope of final acceptance with God. But to-night I feel differently. My thoughts have opened to me a solemn necessity. Spiritual life can only be gained in Truth or certainty, *as God gives it*. If he has appointed an order and method for such attainment, it cannot be gained any other way. How awfully important, then, becomes a union with the Church of CHRIST! How utterly vain any expectation of a private or personal way of salvation! No! Only He—is the Way, Truth, and Life.

And, then, how differently the Word, Ministry and Sacraments appear to me! I have always, of course, respected and honored all these as religious instruments, and looked upon them as valuable to mankind. But to-night, with what awful solemnity do they become invested! As I look upon the Holy Sacrifice of CHRIST, for the forgiveness of sin, and see in that the Truth of God

covenanting with man, I then see the provision made for conveying to every mortal soul the life and grace drawn from that precious fountain-head ; and thus the harmonious system of spiritual life, contained in Sacraments, Ministry, and Word, how precious do they become ! They are not mere convenient arrangements for carrying on a religious polity, and the plan by which a society or congregation may be held together and best controlled. They stand before my mind, under the law, order, and system of that religious body, in which, and by which, CHRIST conveys His pardon for sin, and His promise of spiritual existence. The Word becomes, therefore, to me, the language of my GOD ; the Ministry, the representatives of my Redeemer, and the instruments of His grace ; the Sacraments, holy channels, in which into my soul comes the Comforter, the HOLY GHOST—sanctifier of the faithful !

Oh ! what a rich provision for the wants of man ! Tell me, my heart, canst thou desire more than has been afforded in this, the mercy of thy GOD ? Couldst thou, with never so unblushing a face, seek or wish a more blessed provision than has been made for thee, in this, the Truth of GOD—a CHRIST to die for thee, as the fount of undying life ; and all the joints and bands supplied, by which to bind thee unto Him, and drink and eat that nourishment of thy soul, by which it shall be nourished up unto everlasting life ? All this for thee ! Oh, my heart, thou art blessed !

Nevertheless, let me not look with too daring an eye upon this. Provision is only promise. Promise is not security. I have yet much more to learn, much more to understand, respecting this economy of God, beginning now to dawn so beautifully, so precious upon my sight. Let me preserve a calm and unbiassed mind. Begone, enthusiasm! even for Truth. Depart, excitement and fervor! even respecting the nature of soul-life. I desire to take every step and progression of this examination coolly—coldly—even, that so I need not fear bewilderment.

For the present, I may pause. I now understand the nature of the Church of CHRIST, in herself. I am not advanced much, to be sure, in the distinguishing of the claims of different religious bodies. Yet, that is not of consequence. If I settle upon the characteristics of the Church herself, it will not be difficult to test others by them. *This* I know; and it is sufficient for me. Life is only of God. I cannot live in my body, except under that bodily system which God has appointed. Neither can I truly live in my soul, unless in that spiritual system which He has provided. Therefore, *that* do I seek.

SOLILOQUY V.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CHURCH.

It is not yet dark. A shimmering light lingers upon the face of the winding stream. A kind of trembling radiance hangs over its surface, as though some fond rays of light which had kissed its bosom through the day, enamored of their home, lingered to take a tender farewell. How beautiful is the placid half twilight, and the light around the stream! I love to look down the far distance of the valley, and trace its windings, betrayed by the brightness of those rays. How boldly they stand out against the dark brow of the high hill! How clearly are they relieved by the dark russet of the meadows where they meander! Far, far down, I can trace their course, until they are lost in the distant haze.

Several years ago, and hundreds of miles away, I crossed this stream at its embouchure. Little, then, did I think, as I rode upon its curling waves, and beheld swift-sailing vessels and heavily-freighted barges dotting the surface around me, that, afar off, the same waters should present so pleasing and so quiet a scene: as little as that

the aforesaid spot should be my home. Equally hard is it to realize now, as I gaze upon this sequestered vale, that, in the far distance, this very water presents to-night, the busy, imposing view which I know it must: and that, while here, all is peace and serene beauty; there, all may be agitation, bustle, and toil.

And yet, to-night, when I come to reflect upon it, and turn my attention to the facts of the world around me, relatively to the thoughts teeming within me, these things appear to have a significance worthy of notice. How much the course of this stream resembles that which has formed the subject of my anxious thoughts these last few evenings—the Church of CHRIST, her history and course through long and weary ages. Just thus, in her early years, did the Truth flow, in a bright, slender current—more bright and sparkling for the narrow channel and rugged boundaries through which it passed. And just thus now. In a mighty and resistless flood, reaching far and wide, her waves extend from pole to pole; yet, alas! darkened by their depth, and broken up by their worldly admixture of pride, agitation, and strife.

However, I am not to dwell upon similitudes. I wish to carry out the subject in its simplicity. Truth must not be tampered with. Over-dressed Truth makes but a homely figure, and one little pleasing to the eye. Let me now go on to discover the Church of CHRIST, as the pillar and ground of Truth, in her characteristics.

Last night, I had the *nature* of the Church upon my mind.. I then saw that it was composed of two parts—the external, or *Body* ; the internal, or *Spirit*. The body I find to be that company of faithful, loving beings, who, through the agency of the Ministry, in two sacraments, are brought into covenant with God ; and thus, in a regular and harmonious system, derive from CHRIST (the Head of the Body) that which shall be the gift of eternal life—even the forgiveness of sins and presence of the HOLY GHOST. Hence, the spirit of the Church is the soul-union with God, by means of the HOLY GHOST ; for the conveyance of which, from CHRIST, as the Head of the Body, are given the joints and bands, trunk and branches, which constitute the body of the Church. And this soul-union is, that close, faithful, holy, loving dependence upon God, and imitation of Him, which can alone produce the fruit of all good living.

Now, to examine the characteristics of this Body must be a point of strong interest. I *must* be able to distinguish these from any of false pretensions ; and I must necessarily find some marks, or signs, of her Truth, by which I can satisfactorily determine whether or no I really attach myself to a Body possessing such Truth. What, then, let me ask of myself, are the notes or marks of the Church, according to the nature which I have settled really to belong to her ?

The answer is obvious. If the Word, the Ministry, and

the Sacraments, are instrumental toward the proving of her Body, they may be justly taken as the notes of her integrity; and I must look, therefore, to find in each of these the characteristics of Truth—*i. e.*, Divinity, Unity, and Inflexibility. It may be a slow process; yet still, I cannot relinquish it. I have gone too far to recede. I feel too deeply interested in the issue, to shrink from the process of thought. I will commence with the first of the three—the *Word*.

I fix upon this, then, as the first note, or mark of the Church of GOD—the guide by which to discover her existence. The *Word*—that is, the Truth; for the Word of GOD must be the Truth of GOD; and His Truth given in that Word. For this reason is JESUS himself called the Word of GOD—as St. John saith, “The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us;”* who is also elsewhere styled the Truth, as He is the Life. It is, therefore, the first and plainest mark of the Church of CHRIST, to teach the Word of GOD, and convey His Truth to men; which, as I before have seen, is CHRIST crucified for the sins of the world. Any society, therefore, or religious body, which claims to be the Body of CHRIST, must be found to possess this characteristic. She must contain the Word of GOD, and teach it. I do not mean, as a dead possession, impracticable and theoretical. Not at all. But it must be CHRIST crucified for the sins of the world—as the only

* John, i. 14.

name whereby men can be saved. Her doctrine must be the doctrine contained in the Holy Volume. She may not, she cannot in anywise contradict its teaching. Now, it is clear that the Word of God may be distinguished as His *manifested* Word and His *revealed* Word, in the same way as His Truth may be. The manifested Word, or Truth, was CHRIST manifested in the flesh as the Redeemer of the world.* The revealed Word, or Truth, is the Covenant built upon that manifestation, and the declaration of its design. The Manifestation was withdrawn from earth; and the Revelation is alone consigned to the Church. It is, therefore, this *Revelation* which must be her test. The preaching and teaching of, as well as agreement with, this revealed Word, or Truth, must be the sign and token of her existence, who thus becomes the pillar and ground of the Truth.

In searching, then, for the Church, I must be sure to look for the groundwork of God's revealed Truth:—that is, salvation through the alone merits of Christ; and pardon, the free gift of God to a ruined world, springing from His abounding mercy; the Covenant claim to which pardon is consigned to the administration of His Church. Any doctrine not contained in that Holy Word, any teaching disagreeing with that revealed Truth, must be an indication of error or falsity. For, as I before discovered, this great doctrine is called the Truth of God; and the Church, as the pillar and ground of Truth, can

* 1 John, i 2.

only believe, preach, and teach *it*. If, therefore, the Church were to preach anything short of this, as the ground of salvation; and place before the world any other means of atonement with God than the precious blood of CHRIST, she would prove herself false—by differing from the Truth, demonstrate herself untrue.

For this cause, if I would go on to test the claims of any religious body, I must make it a first point to find whether that body be the pillar and ground of this great Truth of God; does it teach and preach the *Word*, as manifested and as revealed? Does it offer to convey to my soul, in regular and ordained channels, the seal of the forgiveness of sins, through a crucified Redeemer? and does it promise to my trembling heart, a spiritual life and strength derived from the LAMB of GOD, as the true sacrifice for sin, and given unto me as my Saviour's free, abounding gift, in those two Sacraments which are to become the seals and tokens of such Covenant between me and my God? This becomes a very important question; because, if any other plan be offered, it does not agree with what I have seen of the Truth of God. This, then, I make as a clear stand-point; my first mark by which to discover the Church of God: the holding, teaching, and preaching of the Word—that is, the Revelation of God.

This being settled, I must look upon the second test of the Church, and that is—the Ministry. This I must find

(like the Truth) to be, One, Constant, and Divine. Was not this the claim of the first establishment of the Ministry? Did not the Apostle St. Paul, when speaking of the Body of CHRIST, as the Church, write, "of which I am made a Minister, according to the dispensation of GOD?"* He then, evidently claimed for himself a Divine authority; and shows that he placed the source of his commission in the great Head of the Body. The same Apostle also writes, in an another Epistle, "And He (that is, CHRIST,) gave, some Apostles, and some Prophets, and some Evangelists, and some Pastors, and Teachers, for the work of the Ministry, for the edifying of the Body of CHRIST."† Which words I conceive to assert, as positively as possible, the Divine origin of the Ministry to be something no less than CHRIST himself. It appears to me perfectly plain, that the Apostle signifies that the Ministry was given and sent, in order to the building up of CHRIST's Body, which is the Church, and thus, for the purpose of conveying the Truth. Another passage to the same effect occurs to my mind. It is in the Epistle to the Corinthians, where the Apostle expostulates, "Who, then, is Paul, and who is Apollos, but Ministers by whom ye believe, even as the LORD gave to every man. * * * * For we are laborers together with GOD. Ye are GOD's building.‡" By which I can only understand that the Apostle is ar-

* Col. i. 25.

† Eph. iv. 11, 12.

‡ 1 Corinth. iii. 9.

guing, that the Corinthian Christians should not attribute too much to their instrumentality, as though they themselves were the authors of their salvation. Such was not the case. They were the Ministers only; instruments, effectual according as GOD had given them to every man for that purpose. Hence, what they had done was not their own doing; it was GOD, effectual through them. Of course, then, if GOD had given them, and if the work which they had accomplished was not their doing, but GOD's, through them; the Divine authority for their act and office is clearly assumed.

But this is not all. The Ministry of the Church must be, not only Divine in its authority or power, but also Divine in its *transmission* or *conveyance*. In other words—not only must her Ministry have authority from CHRIST, originally, as the Head of the Church; but, also, through CHRIST *continually*, as the Root of the Vine, by a transmission directly from the Divine. I become satisfied of this, by a recurrence to the first establishment of the Ministry, by the Great Head of the Body; which was a direct, orderly, systematic sending of officers to their proper stations, by an authority peculiarly His own; and conveyed, in their solemn appointment to a sacred purpose, by a spiritual authority transmitted to them from the Father. This I find in the passage of St. Luke, where we are told that the LORD “called together his twelve disciples, and gave them power and authority over all

devils, and to cure diseases.”* Such is the *appointment*. The *purpose* for which they were sent as Ministers of the Body of CHRIST—that is, to carry on spiritual life through the administration of the Sacraments—is mentioned by St. Matthew, who says, that our Saviour gave charge unto His disciples, “Go ye and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost;”† and adding, “teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you;” under which head comes the Supper of the LORD. The spiritual *power*, as transmitted to them in a solemn personal act, St. John records in his last chapter—“JESUS said unto them, peace be unto you! As my Father hast sent me, even so send I you. And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said, Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto you; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained. And, lo! I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.”‡ From all these passages, I gather that the Divine authority was also a Divine transmission, as a direct spiritual gift in their official actions; and that, as the Saviour breathed on them, it was in order to convey to them the power of the Holy Ghost, to operate in those Sacraments which they were to administer; and to be by them conveyed in the same manner, in a personal act, even as CHRIST sent them from the Father. For this cause, I understand this pro-

* Luke, ix. 1.

† Math. xx. 19.

‡ John, xx. 23

mise, "Lo! I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world," to be an *official*, as a real promise. Of course, by the word, "you," I do not suppose our Saviour to mean the Apostles themselves, in *their individual capacity*; for they did not, as they could not, continue unto the end of time: but, by "you," it is perfectly clear He signifies His Ministry, as deriving their power successively from Him, unto the end of the world; even as He had from the Father derived His authority. This could be done only in one way—*i. e.*, by the transmission and conveyance, from each to another, of that official power, in a harmonious line and order, suitable to the Truth of that Body for whom He appointed them.

That I am not mistaken in such an inference, and am really following out the line of the Truth, in these thoughts, some other passages of the Apostles' writings assure me. I know that I can, in a few moments, turn to several places which imply the direct conveyance of such authority and power, not only *from* CHRIST, but *through* others, as an official appointment for the constitution of His Church. So St. Paul, writing to Timothy, whom he styles his "son in the faith," says, "Wherefore, I put thee in remembrance, that thou stir up the gift of God which is in Thee by the putting on of my hands."* And that the Apostle meant by the term "gift," the authority and power of the Holy Ministry, as conveyed by the

* 2 Tim. i. 6.

laying on of his hands, appears evident to my mind, from a verse which follows almost immediately—"That good thing which was committed unto thee, keep, by the Holy Ghost, which dwelleth in us."* Now, this HOLY GHOST is the very gift which CHRIST gave, when He breathed on His Apostles, and said, "Receive ye the HOLY GHOST."

Again, in the Epistle to Titus, the same Apostle writes—"For this cause I left thee in Crete, that thou shouldst set in order the things that are wanting; and ordain elders in every city, as I had ordained thee.† Whatever, then, was the authority and power of the Apostle, or, if he had any at all more than others, that power he appears to have committed to Titus;—not as a dead gift, nor as a finished office; but in order that he should transmit that same power (exactly as the Apostle had done, by the laying on of hands) to others who were to be Ministers of the mysteries of God. If, then, St. Paul himself had really any Divine commission, that commission was to be extended, through Titus, to other inheritors of its power; and the Divine investiture which he had received from CHRIST was to be continued in them, as an authority equally Divine, being thus received from the Great Head of the Church. So, also, another passage of the same Apostle implies—"Thou, therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in JESUS CHRIST; and the things which thou hast heard of me,

* 2 Tim. i. 14.

† Titus, i. 5.

commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.”*

Upon the whole, therefore, I am satisfied that the Ministry of the Church is Divine, not only in its institution, but in its transmission; and answers, in this point, to the characteristic of the Truth. If, then, I am to find the Church of God, it must be found with such a Ministry—an Order of men appointed for the preaching of the Word and the Ministry of the Sacraments. Divinely appointed, too, not merely in their first establishment, as of the Divine will; but in their transmission of that Divine authority and presence received from CHRIST himself, as a power by which they, unto the end of the world, truly carry on the Covenant of God upon His Truth, and administer to mankind the two Sacraments in which CHRIST’s salvation is sealed by faith, unto all the children of God.

Now, I come to my other tests of Truth, in this mark or sign of the Church. Not only must the Ministry be Divine, but it must be United and Constant. According to this, how will the note of the Church at the present day stand? Must one token of the Church be a Ministry united in its constitution, through all ages, without contradiction or discrepancy, as well as Divine? Certainly; if it is to be *true*.

Let me then see how I can best consider this, and place the matter so as to most correctly view the nature of

* 2 Tim. ii. 1, 2.

unity in the Ministry, through all time. Stay! I see I mistake myself. That word was an error. But, in fact, the mistake suggests the best way of thinking upon this. The unity of Truth must be a perpetual unity; and not only perpetual, but universal. Hence, the unity of the Ministry in the Church must be not only one of *time*, but also of *space*. And, of the nature of Truth, I hold that it is an absolute necessity that, whatever be the Church of CHRIST, it must present the token of a Ministry which is the same in constitution, and does not contradict that which has been in all *time*, and in all *regions*. This is a very wide assumption; and by its width, sadly narrows what is left exterior to it. Can I prove it so?

Yes; if I start with the assertion that a Divine Ministry has existed, in three Orders, through all time. That is to say, through all time where a Ministry exterior to the family or patriarchial institution was given. As soon as the second stage of the Church, its national development was reached, and the special appointment of an Order of men as Ministers and Priests of the Most High was made, then, in its ordering by the Almighty, nearly three thousand years ago, I can instance the conveyance of the Covenant upon the Truth of CHRIST's atonement, by a Ministry of three Orders. Even then, in that far back age, I find that GOD appointed, in His Divine Wisdom, three Orders of Ministers to attend upon holy things, and to convey to His people, through the Sacraments of Cir-

cumcision and Sacrifice, the pledge of His Covenant upon the Truth of the one great Sacrifice which was to come ; and these three Orders were then, High Priests, Priests, and Levites.

I find the appointment of the third, or lowest Order—that of the Levites—in the Book of Numbers.* They were appointed in the stead of the first-born of every family, who were claimed by the Almighty as His own, and who, in the Patriarchal age, were the Priests of the family. These were to be redeemed by the appointment of the tribe of Levi, who were to minister at the altar, and wait upon the higher Order of Priests and High Priests, in their officiation in the Sacrifices, &c. ; as Moses commanded—"Thou shalt give the Levites unto Aaron and his sons : they are wholly given unto Him, to do the service of the Tabernacle."†

The next in order was the family of Aaron, which was chosen by the Almighty to be the line of succession of His Priests. The sons of Aaron were to be Priests and Ministers at the altar, in the more solemn performance of the Sacraments of Circumcision and Sacrifice. So we read in the same work, "Thou shalt appoint Aaron and his sons to minister in their Priests' offices ;"‡ and then is given that fearful warning against assumption of the Priesthood—"The stranger that cometh nigh, shall be put to death."§ Of these we read, "These are the sons of Aaron, the

* Numb. iii. 5, 15. † Numb. iii. 7. ‡ Numb. iii. 10. § Numb. iii. 10.

Priests which were anointed, whom he laid hand on, to minister in the Priests' office.*

The third and highest Order was that of the Chief or High Priest, the head and director of the Jewish Church. This, at the first, was Aaron himself; and after him, in natural descent, his sons, generally in the order of their birthright. To him appertained the special privilege of entering once a year into the Holy of Holies, and of presenting an atonement for the sins of the people. Also to him was given the mysterious interpretation of the Truth of God; so that, when clothed with the proper emblems of his sacerdotal office, together with the Urim and Thummim, he was enabled to disclose the secrets of the future, and prophesy that which was to come.

Thus, in the earliest age of the national Church I find three Orders of the Ministry, as appointed by God Himself, and as instruments by which He carried on the Covenant, upon the Truth of an atoning LAMB. That appointment also was carried on inviolate, until the time of the enlargement of the Church to her catholic or universal degree. In the Book of Chronicles, many hundred years after their institution, we find record of the continuation of these Orders; and at the manifestation of the Truth, in the person of CHRIST, there still remained with the chosen people of God, the three Orders of the Ministry, as the Divine appointment.

* Numb. iii. 3.

Now, in the enlargement and increase of the Church by CHRIST JESUS, and the alteration of character from temporal to spiritual, was this continued? That is the point to be settled in my mind. The presumption would be in the affirmative, if the unity of the Truth is preserved. Can I find it so? Let me examine.

Although the Covenant changed in its character, nothing was abolished or destroyed; for our LORD declares, "I come not to destroy the law or the prophets; I come to fulfil."* Nothing was really annihilated. The three Orders of the Ministry were also re-established in the Catholic or Universal Church, by the Divine Power, as a fact, although changed in their features. This becomes evident to me, on looking at the first appointment by JESUS of His Ministry. St. Luke tells us, that CHRIST "called His twelve disciples together, and gave them authority over all devils, and to cure diseases; and sent them to preach the Kingdom of God, and to heal the sick."† In this I find plainly and indubitably *two* Orders in the Church:—first, CHRIST, sent of the Father, to be the Head of the Church, and governing and sending those under Him; and, second, the Twelve Disciples, or Apostles, ordained by Him to preach the Kingdom of God, and to whom He gave power and authority over all devils. They were under the personal command of CHRIST, who, as the Great High Priest, made them Priests unto Himself.

* Math. v. 17.

† Luke, ix. 12.

This accounts satisfactorily for two Orders. Now, in running my eye along, as far as the next chapter of that Gospel, I find mention made of yet another, and third Order, more numerous than the second, as it would appear also that they were inferior:—"The LORD appointed other seventy, also, and sent them two and two before His face, into every city whither He Himself would come."* This, then, presents the third Order, as the Levites, to minister to the High Priest. That they were inferior, the greater number itself would show, in the same relation as the Twelve Apostles to CHRIST. But the commission given was also different; they were sent as the lowest Order, simply to minister unto CHRIST, by preparing His way in preaching the Kingdom of God. Power and authority over devils, in their own person, was not given them; and their authority was only operative by the name of JESUS.

At the very foundation of the Christian Church, then, I can perceive the same three Orders; and the constitution of the Jewish Church I therefore discover to be unimpaired. There was no contradiction. Although that succession was changed to a spiritual succession, and to be handed down from spiritual father to spiritual son, as the inheritance divinely received from CHRIST, yet the reality was the same.

Neither was all this extinguished, when CHRIST ascended

* Luke, x. 1.

to the right hand of the Father. The unity of the Truth was still preserved. The time of the Apostles gives me evidence abundant of the same threefold office in the Ministry, when viewed in connection with the past; for in the Epistle of St. Paul to Titus, he charges him to ordain Elders or Presbyters, as he had ordained him; and he speaks of these Presbyters as Overseers or Bishops, whom he was to rule and govern. In this I see two Orders of the Ministry satisfactorily established:—first, Titus, ordained by the Apostle to fill his place in the Apostleship, and thus ordaining others as Presbyters or Bishops, and ruling over them according to his judgment. He was, therefore, certainly superior to these, and set over them, which will indicate two Orders. In the Epistle to Timothy, (holding a similar position to Titus), the same Apostle, after speaking of the Presbyters or Overseers, under his direction, mentions a third office—"Likewise, also, must the Deacons be grave, not double-tongued. Let them first be proved; and then let them use the office of a Deacon."* Here again, therefore, we find three Orders of the Ministry. Timothy and Titus, associated with the Apostle in his highest office of the Church, ordaining and ruling as such; and under them the Presbyters, Elders, or Bishops, as second in order; and then the Deacons, as the third and lowest in that united, Divine Ministry.

* 1 Tim. iii. 8.

And thus it must continue of the nature of Truth to the present day, in the Church of God. The three Orders, which, by Divine appointment, in natural succession, ministered to the Covenant upon God's Truth, in the anticipated Sacrifice of CHRIST, I find to be still in the unity of that Truth—three Orders, in a spiritual succession, ministering to a like Covenant upon that one blessed Truth—forgiveness of sins through the sacrifice of CHRIST, as retrospectively applied.

I am, then, abundantly satisfied concerning what must be the token of the Church in her unity of the Ministry, through all *time*. It is that of a sacred, Divine, threefold Ministry, for the administration of God's Covenant upon the Sacrifice, through every age of the existence of such administered Covenant.

But, though this may be settled, is there not a more difficult point in the unity of *space*? Can I find that characteristic of Truth verified in the testimony of experience? Has a threefold Ministry the consent of Truth, *in all regions*?

Ah! Here I come to a pause. As I look around, my old grief returns. How distracted and divided the Christian world! What difference and strife is to be seen! Can I possibly find any unity at all in different portions of the Christian world, setting aside a unity upon this threefold Ministry?

In this country, indeed, where error and divisions are

multiplied, it would seem as though the unity of space would fail, and that the united testimony of the great mass of the Christian world would be against the integrity of a threefold Ministry ; and yet I know that would be a most unfair view. I must look at the whole world, in such a consideration, and take the unity of all Christendom. Now, what are the great, the leading divisions of religious faith ? Geographers divide them into the Churches of Rome, of Greek and Protestant separation. I am ready to divide them into another separation ; but not yet. Taking the geographers' scale, I find the following proportion :—Church of Rome, 120 millions ; Greek Church, 70 millions ; Protestant Churches, 50 millions. What, then, is the view of the majority of these, respecting a threefold Ministry ? Greek and Roman Christians tenaciously hold as their religious creed, that a Ministry was divinely appointed in those Orders, to be successively derived from CHRIST. This gives me at once 190 millions attesting the Truth, to about 50 millions disregarding it. But that, even, does not present the true view of proportion, I am satisfied ; for out of that 50 millions reckoned as Protestant, are to be deducted all those holding the faith of Episcopacy, and the necessity of three Orders as,—the Church of England, the Episcopal Church in America, the Swedish, Danish, and Moravian Churches ; which, if I subtract, I shall not have, at the largest computation, 30 millions who reject the belief in a threefold Ministry ;

the rest (being two hundred and ten or twenty millions) making that point one of settled importance as part of their religious belief. From this it would surely appear, that the unity of *space* does attest the Truth of the existence of the Church of God ; and that the great, overwhelming majority of the Christian world holds, at the present day, the necessity of a Ministry, divinely appointed in three Orders, for the carrying on the Church of CHRIST. Therefore I conclude that the token may be found, that not only all ages, but all regions, witness to the Truth of God.

And yet this is a new thought to me. I had not expected to find it thus. I little supposed, the first evening that I sat down with anxious heart, bewailing the strife and contradiction of the religious world, that I should ever see so much of unity in any one point. I was very differently impressed. Forming my ideas by the circumstances immediately around me, and the very great preponderance of conflicting creeds in this my own country, I had never looked upon those holding the views of Episcopacy, in any other light than as a small body entertaining peculiar notions—a mere handful, as it were, among the multitude. How differently I see it now! The handful are, rather, those who deny a threefold Ministry: the multitude, those who retain it. And then, again, that handful itself is divided and broken, and must be split up into the almost innumerable—I was going to say, grains of sand ; but we

will call it parcels of opinion, represented by Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians, Unitarians, Universalists, Congregationalists, &c., &c.

Now, one more point, and I may sum my conclusion. *Constancy* remains to be settled, as the last characteristic of Truth, and a note of the Church. What can that be? and, how do I see it sustained?

By Constancy in the Ministry, I can only understand a Ministry of just and unbroken descent. Such was the Priesthood of the Jewish Covenant, descending as a heritage from father to son, uninterrupted, through all ages. Such, then, must be the Ministry of the Church of CHRIST;—one not diverted from the Truth of GOD, but holding the due and proper subordination of superior and inferior officers, as a direct relation to the Head of all. The difference will be this. I know that there are several societies who retain the *title* of three Orders of Ministry, and make a distinction (only according to their convenience for social government) between these Orders. This is contrary to the true *constancy* of the Ministry. The reality of that must be, three Orders as really and truly distinct—one as the chief and head, upon whom they depend, and from whom (through CHRIST) they derive their authority and position. This alone can make the unity of the body, the subordination and system, which I saw prevailed in all the other kingdoms of GOD. Holding firm to this, and rejecting all separation from that Order, is the inflexibility of the

Ministry, and is the final point connected with that token or sign of the Church, as her distinguishing characteristic.

This may, for the present, conclude my meditation. I have pondered sufficiently upon this to-night; and thankful am I that I see as much as I now do of the Truth. Two of the characteristics of the Church are settled, to my own mind. I know what to look for in searching after the Body of CHRIST. I see, first of all, the bright mark of the Word or Truth of GOD—the teaching, preaching, and upholding that blessed Truth given in the Sacred Word—JESUS, the Lamb of GOD, taking away the sins of the world—CHRIST crucified, as the only fountain of pardon and peace, the only means of forgiveness of sins. There is no truth of GOD in any body denying this; there can be none in any creed offering less than this: for this is all and alone the foundation of any Covenant of GOD. Yes, and it must be, the CHRIST: not CHRIST, the man; but the man, CHRIST—GOD over all, blessed for evermore—the “only begotten Son of the Father—full of grace and Truth.”*

And then I see the next token of the Church in her Ministry. I must search for this, as a Ministry—One—Constant, and Divine—which shall be to me the means by which that blessed Truth and Word of GOD, a crucified Redeemer, shall be conveyed. These, divinely appointed,

* John i. 14.

shall preach to me that CHRIST, as my only refuge ; and to them, “preaching as they are sent,”* I shall hearken ; and my “faith” shall come by “hearing of that Word of GOD ;”† and to my believing, repenting heart, they shall promise pardon and peace in that Covenant of JESUS, reconciling me to GOD ;‡ and then washing me from my sin, through the “washing of regeneration ;”§ they shall administer to me the pledge of the “renewing of the HOLY GHOST,” even that “Baptism by which I shall put on CHRIST ;”|| and finally, as stewards “of GOD’s mysteries,”¶ they shall feed me with the blessed food for my new life, even the Spirit of CHRIST, shadowed under bread and wine ; and so I shall “eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood,”** fulfil my soul-union with GOD ; and thus I shall “dwell in CHRIST, and He in me.”††

Oh, GOD ! can this be true ? My Redeemer, Holy LORD ! wilt Thou, indeed, dwell with men ? and through these appointed channels, *Thyself* come unto me ? Blessed ! blessed be Thy Holy name !—adored forever Thy mercy, grace, and love ! Oh ! let me bow my wondering heart in lowliest, humblest prayer, and cry, “What is this, that my LORD should come unto me ! I am not worthy that Thou shouldst come under my roof. Nevertheless, be it unto me, even according to Thy Word.”

* Luke, ix. 2. † Rom. x. 17. ‡ 2 Cor. vi. 18. § Titus iii. 5. || Gal. iii. 2.
¶ 1 Corinth. iv. 1. ** John, vi. 53. †† 1 John, iii. 21.

SOLILOQUY VI.

INITIATION INTO TRUTH.

How sweet was the glow upon my heart, last night, as I concluded my meditation! How my soul seemed to warm within me as I traced out the gracious provision of the mercy of God, in the establishment of His Truth! Is it always so, when we give ourselves to the contemplation of sacred things? I believe it is. Strange, then, that religious contemplation is so little practised—nay, that I have, myself, so little practised it.

In our work-day age, we imagine it a waste of time; and we are not content unless we are all “up and doing,” in a different sense from the poet’s thought. To be still—to commune with our own hearts—to do nothing but *think* upon the awful and tremendous realities of our spiritual life, would be accounted sheer idleness. And yet, through this remissness, we are kept strangers to the sweetest emotions of calm delight which we can experience. I have found it so. How I wonder at it! Men run here and there for spiritual meat, and grudge if they be not satisfied. They attend sermons unweariedly; fol-

low up meetings continually; do anything to stir up in their dull souls a *feeling* of religion, and yet never think that they may sit down in the quiet of devout contemplation, and learn more and feel better than in any irruptive struggle of soul.

I *know* this is so. The glow and delight in my heart yet lingers, from the last evening, and incites me with strong desire to drink of that same precious fountain of Truth again, and again in the “night, to commune with my heart and search out my spirit.”

I had finished the consideration of the first two characteristics of the Church—the Word and the Ministry—and brought my mind to a clear conviction respecting what must be the nature of both these, in the integrity of that which would be the Church of God.

I am now to take up the last of the marks of the Church, which is the Sacraments. I need not examine these precisely, as I have the former; although the same tests may be justly applied. I will rather take a comparative view, and place the progression of the Church upon the ground of Constancy, to discover their true character.

Neither is this at all an unimportant point. By the administration of these Sacraments in their integrity, the Church must ever be known; inasmuch as they are the channels through which spiritual life is conveyed to the whole Body; and by which, from the Head, even CHRIST, is received all spiritual strength and pledge of the Cove-

nant—grace. So far, it is of the most intense necessity that they shall be duly and truly administered. I must thoroughly understand what constitutes them, in their perfection. Here, then, again, comes up the point I had in view last night, and again I perceive the unity of the whole—that is, the integrity of the Ministry—as necessary to the validity of the Sacraments. They cannot be really the Sacraments of CHRIST, unless administered as CHRIST designed. They can therefore be administered only by those whom CHRIST appointed for that purpose, as stewards of the mysteries. It requires no extraordinary brilliancy of intellect to discover this. It is self-evident. Either the Sacraments can be administered by every and any man, or else only particularly by some. If by any and all, there is need of no such thing as a Ministry, in any shape or kind. If only by some particularly, then those who are to do this must be appointed by the same authority which gave the Sacraments. Unless, therefore, I should be prepared to assert that any man can administer Baptism properly and rightly, or celebrate the Holy Communion duly and justly, I must admit that CHRIST Himself appointed some men particularly for the purpose. And, therefore, on considering the last sign of the Church and her Sacraments, I must understand, as a fixed principle, that a true Ministry shall perform them.

But now I am faced with another difficulty. I know that a large religious Body, claiming unity with the Head,

declare that there are seven Sacraments, under some circumstances necessary to true spiritual life. I have spoken to myself of two only. What shall I now say? How can I prove the right? By the Truth. My tests are here valuable as ever. Divinely appointed, there are but two that I can find in the Holy Word. Incontestibly, CHRIST gave only Baptism and the Supper of the LORD. These alone have a *directly* Divine authority proving them true. No Sacraments, so far as I have seen, have ever been mediately appointed—that is to say, by human authority, under a Divine influence. That would not give them the Divine authority which Truth must possess. They require the direct and positive institution of God Himself. Hence I infer that there can be two Sacraments only, from the fact that CHRIST, in person, appointed but two—Baptism and the Holy Eucharist. Then, again, *Unity*, as the sign of Truth, demands the same thing. There were only two Sacraments in the Old Dispensation, as the means of anticipatively applying the benefits of the Great Sacrifice; and we ought only to look for two in the New. Unless there is alteration and change of *fact*, (which there cannot be in Truth), the instruments must remain the same. There must continue the same channels for the same conveyance of the Great Truth, although they may be developed to a higher nature. Circumcision and Sacrifice were the only Sacraments of salvation to the Jew; and spiritual circumcision and spiritual sacrifice

can be alone, by the law of unity, the Sacraments for salvation to the Christian. Upon these two alone, in the first ages of the Church, thousands of years ago, the membership and blessings of the Covenant hung. They were temporal acts and carnal rights, yet conveying all the blessings of that temporal covenant, and having appended to them a further eternal blessing which the darkness of that Dispensation shrouded. Still, they were simple and true acts. They promised and gave all the advantages attendant upon membership with the Church of God; and in them and through them was promised a felicity to be obtained only from the coming Messiah. Therefore, in the development of the Church, and her advancement from purely temporal unto truly spiritual nature, this instrumentality, I am sure, could not be altered in fact, any more than the Church herself: it must remain at unity with the past. If there needed but two channels for the conveyance of life in the old Covenant upon the Truth, there cannot and must not be but two in the new Covenant, without a difference which the unity of Truth cannot bear. The *nature* of them must indeed be changed, in order to meet the advanced requirements of a higher Dispensation and a purer Covenant; but this is only their fulfilment and perfection, such as is the perfection of the man maturing from the child—changing, indeed, from the past, yet without altering of his personal identity.

This, then, need never trouble me more. I see that Divinity and Unity point out two Sacraments, and the two that CHRIST ordained as marks of the Church of CHRIST. I need only, therefore, examine these; and the first, evidently, is that of Baptism.

Baptism!—a sprinkling of water, or an immersion into a river! or a pouring out of a quantity upon the head! *This*, the great instrument of which I have been considering! Can it be that so utterly insignificant an act can be so immensely important, and have its bearing upon the immortal soul of man? As I look upon yonder sparkling river, and see its silver thread of light reflecting back the stars, do I look upon an element possessing so miraculously powerful a virtue as to recreate the soul? Blind folly! No! Insensate wandering of mind, to even dream this! Water hath no power, sprinkled, poured, or flooded, to take away my sin. There is naught residing in it, effectual to my soul's health. I must look further than it, for anything of its power. It is only the sacred Truth of God, which is available to me. But, then, if to this means it shall so please Him as to append the promise of His Truth, and to *obedience* He will pledge His Grace; then, indeed, may water become transformed, and it shall have what He has given it, a power mysterious—not of its *nature*, but through His grace—to bring a soul condemned within the bounds of His undying love.

This is the efficacy of water, in Baptism, I feel assured.

They would cheat my mind who would fain tell me of some inherent power, inseparable from its consecrated use, and like some solemn charm, operative to the inevitable recreation of the soul. No! All its power can only come from Him who is the Truth. If He shall make its use the test of holy faith and humble love; and if it please Him to appoint that lustrating, outward sign, as a pledge of a resembling inward grace, to Him alone be all the glory; the instrument hath none. Yet, is it hereby less valuable? No—according to His command, it hath all that He has given it; it is worth all that He has seen fit to append to its use; and to my obedience it is as indispensably essential as is the very Truth itself.

In looking at this rite, I wish to examine closely both phases. First, this exterior operation—the outward appointment for the conveyance of the Truth; and then, the interior, or effect of the Truth so conveyed.

First, then—The external evidence of Baptism, as the outward appointment for the conveyance in the Church of the Truth of CHRIST's atonement.

Measurably, I see, I have gone over this ground, when I reflected upon the number of the Sacraments. Baptism, I know, was no new thing, when given as the initiation into the new Covenant. It was not new as a figure; it was not new as a fact; it was not new as a Sacrament. As a Sacrament, it was not new, because it was only the advancement of that which had been before in Circumcision.

Circumcision had been the rite initiatory into the promise of the blessings of God's Truth; and Baptism succeeded, as the rite initiatory into the same blessings. It was not new as a fact; for I have indubitable evidence that the Jews practised Baptism before the coming of JESUS, upon proselytes and females. Neither was it new as a figure; for the baptism of the proselytes was only an emblem of the purgation which they should undergo from the impure and idolatrous rites of the heathen. I am not, then, to suppose that Baptism came in as so new an appointment, as so strange a ceremony, that I must cast about to understand its nature or its effect. I must see it simply as the continuation and the perfection of what was a grosser figure; and in the initiatory rite of Circumcision, for the Old Covenant, its effects and benefits, I must discover the beginning of what Baptism is, as the initiative rite for the New. The latter only the elevation and completion of the former.

As, then, by Circumcision, the Jew was admitted into the company of the Covenant, and received a title to salvation—by it made one of the people of GOD, according to outward evidence—through it obtained a title to an inheritance in the promised land, and thus received in his flesh the pledge of God's Truth through a coming Messiah; in the same way Baptism becomes, in the New Dispensation, the external evidence of union with the Body of CHRIST, the company of the faithful; and is the means by which

men are initiated into that fold. Circumcision, therefore, being an absolute and indispensable necessity to the Jewish Church—an integral part of the same ; Baptism, as its perfection and completion, must be the same in the Christian Church ; and the promises of eternal life must now be as really tied to it as they formerly were to Circumcision. Whatever were the benefits of the one, are, in an extended sense, the benefits of the other. The Church, in the national development, could not exist without Circumcision ; neither can the universal development exist without Baptism. Circumcision was the only means by which the Jewish Church was entered, and through which the pledge of salvation was conveyed ; and thus Baptism is the only means by which the Catholic Church is entered, and the pledge of salvation received.

I might be satisfied, I think, with this, looking simply at the analogy of the case and the unity of the Truth ; but it will be as well to push the matter as far as it can go. I will appeal to the direct assertion of the Holy Word, upon this point, to see whether or no it will present the same view. St. Paul treats of this subject in his Epistle to the Colossians, and he writes—"In whom ye are circumcised, with the Circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the Circumcision of CHRIST : buried with Him in Baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him, through faith of the operation of God."*

* Col., ii. 2.

In which passage I perceive that the Apostle speaks of Baptism as conveying to all the members of the Holy Head the benefits of His Circumcision, by a Circumcision made without hands—*i. e.*, the Circumcision of the heart, of which their Baptism was the figure—the outward sign and token. Now, if the Apostle puts Baptism forward as taking the place of Circumcision, and to fill its office, I must be able to find it as a means of salvation, because I know Circumcision was this—that is to say, an instrument by which the Covenant of Truth was obtained. Nor will proofs of this be wanting. It is the strong language of St. Peter—"Even Baptism doth also now save us."* How does he mean? As a final act? As a completed effect? Assuredly not. No such monstrosity could have come into his mind. It saves us only in the same way that Circumcision saved the Jews; as the Apostle expresses it—"By the answer of a good conscience towards God; *by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.*" That is to say, by obedience to the command, the benefits of CHRIST's death and resurrection avail to each member, in the *promise* of salvation. In the same way, the Apostle St. Paul distinctly puts it—"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy, He saved us, by the *washing of regeneration* and renewing of the HOLY GHOST; which He shed on us abundantly, through JESUS CHRIST our Saviour; that, being justified by His grace, we should

* 1 Peter, iii. 21.

be made heirs, according to the hope of eternal life.”* Nay, why do I ponder yet, so far off from the Author Himself. What said JESUS? “He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved.”† Faith and Baptism, joint instruments to that effect.

I ask no more, to show me the exterior position of Baptism in the Church. This will abundantly suffice. I will now turn to the interior operation, to examine that token of the same.

I am not now to be persuaded that Baptism is a mere performance of an outward rite. Perhaps some time since I might have thought so. I remember that I once looked upon it as a mere formality, necessary to the observance of an outward connection with a religious body, but nothing more. I have learned something in these, my meditations. Oh! how solemn and fearful now appear all instruments by which spiritual life is carried on, and Baptism as one of them! I can no more speak of it lightly, or treat it forgetfully. I certainly have always known that, by Baptism the Word of God declares we “put on CHRIST;”‡ but yet I never realized what that meant. Now, I begin to do so. It is this, in fact, which I see to have been the great advance of Baptism, (as a Sacrament,) beyond Circumcision. In Circumcision, the pledge of salvation was given, but nothing more. There it ended. Man was to struggle onward, in an obedience devoid of

* Titus, iii. 5, 6, 7.

† Mark, xvi. 16.

‡ Galat. iii. 27

any extraordinary helps; or graces. When the rite was performed, the Covenant was sealed in and through a carnal obedience, and that was all. Baptism, on the other hand, becomes a spiritual Covenant; and the administration of the rite is accompanied with the helps of the Spirit. The pouring out of water on the person baptised, is only emblematic of the pouring out of the Spirit upon the heart which is therein pledged and covenanted. By Baptism, man, who is born in sin, and in a state of wrath—his heart alienated from God, and his nature unblest by the visitations of the purchased Spirit of CHRIST; such an one is born again into a new state and condition.* Not only is his body outwardly united to the company of God's promised people, and by that rite received into the number of the elect,"† but his soul also is brought into a state of amity and communion with God.‡ His spiritual being is vivified. The breath of a new life breathes upon him.§ The extraordinary helps and assistances of the Spirit of CHRIST (the purchase of His death) hang like a new atmosphere round the soul, seeking to arouse in it the breath of the new existence; and so to enable it to work out, in spirit-life, that change of heart and of being which is a new creature in CHRIST JESUS.|| By the very Covenant of that Sacrament, the Spirit is poured out upon such a heart, and the soul is placed in that new state of capability for intercourse with

* 1 John, iii. 1, 9. † Peter, v. 13. ‡ Rom. v. 1. § Ezek. xxxvii. 1, 10.

|| 2 Corinth. v. 17.

GOD which is called in Scripture the regeneration, or new birth. So speaks the Redeemer. "Verily I say unto you, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."* And the Apostle St. Paul tells us, in his Epistle to Titus, that, we are saved only by the mercy of GOD, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the HOLY GHOST. In which words I see the instrumentality of Baptism and the new life plainly set forward.

As, therefore, the Church of CHRIST is to convey to man spiritual existence in the same order and harmony as the natural life, and that life to be drawn from CHRIST the Head, Baptism becomes the channel through which that life is begun, in its spiritual effects. By nature, the soul is dead. It is unable to understand or receive the things of GOD. It is out of His Covenant. It is open to His wrath. To give life to the soul—spiritual life to the man—he must be born again. He must be placed in a new position. His soul must be surrounded by the special influence of GOD's Spirit, as one in a covenanted state of favor. He must have given to him, by pledge, that which by nature he cannot have—the extraordinary co-operation of the HOLY GHOST, to wait upon His own sincere endeavors toward the work of his salvation. Therefore, he must be spiritually born again. Both body and soul must be put in a new state and condition; which condition is the

* John, iii. 5.

blessed privilege of all those who are by Baptism made members of CHRIST, and thus *covenanted* with to receive from Him as the Head that HOLY GHOST which can alone renew the heart ; and the submission to which—the following of which, in all the fullness of spirit life—shall make that new man, which, “ after CHRIST, is created in righteousness and true holiness.”*

Is this, then, the renewing of the man ? By no means ; and I must be careful to prevent confusion in my mind upon this point. This change of state is not necessarily a change of heart. Although by this act, and in this Covenant Sacrament, a man is regenerated and born again, of water and the HOLY GHOST, yet he is not by that made a new man, nor his heart changed. That renewed man, and that changed heart, is to be the great labor of his existence ; and the vast purpose of that spiritual life is to become renewed day by day,† to the growth of the stature of a perfect man,‡ in CHRIST JESUS. If I look at the natural world, it will teach me this. God will not contradict Himself. Harmony will be in all his actions. Spiritual life is bestowed as all life. How then is it with the little infant, born into the world ? Is not it in a new state and condition ? Most assuredly—a condition entirely new to the past. And yet it may be dead and lifeless. Unless there be a *vital principle* active in it, *birth is not life* ; and, although the atmosphere of life hang around it—the air kiss

* Eph. iv. 24.

† 2 Cor. iv. 16.

‡ Ephes. iv. 13.

its lips, the light touch its lids, and all the *means* of life wait upon its being—yet, if that vital principle be not there, it is *born in vain*. Unless prior to the birth, the mysterious quickening of life has taken place, its birth is nothing ; its means of existence around it are nothing ; the new atmosphere waiting upon its reception is as nothing. It is not a new being. So with the soul of man. It may be born again in Baptism, into a new world ; it may, through that instrumentality, be brought into a new condition ; the new atmosphere of the Spirit of God may hang round it, seeking to stir it unto new life ; and yet, unless the vital principle—the implanted Spirit of God—have first *quickened* it unto *repentance*, vain the new birth ; it is as lifeless and dead as the natural body born without the vital principle. It is only to the soul where the germ of God's Spirit has moved and stirred, causing the emotions of *repentance* and the yearnings of *faith* :—only to such a soul does that new birth of Baptism bring a new creature, which, with the change of state, seeks and strives after a change of heart ; and which, through the extraordinary helps and assistances of the HOLY GHOST, in that new state, by daily renewing, shall at last arrive to the full stature of a man, in CHRIST JESUS.*

Oh ! “Blessed be the GOD and Father of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, who hath so blessed us with all spiritual blessings in CHRIST JESUS,†” and provided so simple, so

* Ephes. iv. 13.

† Ephes. i. 3.

harmonious, so perfect a manner of gaining everlasting life. "Marvel not that ye must be born again."* Why should I? What mystery is there in this, that I have not pictured every day of my life? And, if Baptism "does save us,"† surely I know that it is no mere putting away of the filth of the flesh, or outward formality, as a change of state or condition. No, indeed. It is the spiritual life which that is intended to convey, by which alone we can truly live; and that life, while begun in Baptism, as a real, struggling existence, must have its germ in the repentance and faith springing from the implanted Spirit of God. Either, alone, I perceive to be vain. The vital principle of repentance and faith is imperfect, unless with it I am born, through Baptism, into that new world in which I live by the breath of the Spirit of God, as its atmosphere. And thus, also, the birth into that Covenant and state is vain, unless accompanied by that vital principle of repentance and faith, alone constituting its true value.

Is this true, in every case? I believe it is. I can see no exception. Wherever the heart has become dead, through sin; wherever the natural mind, in its growth, has shut out the life of God; there must be this new life, beginning in the germ, and perfected in the birth.

And yet, after all, I forget myself. So completely absorbed in my own case, I have become oblivious to the fact, that my case, and the cases of those resembling me, are

* John, iii. 7.

† 1 Peter, iii. 21.

not the only ones. What is the operation of this initiation into Truth (the baptismal birth) upon childhood and helpless infancy? *There*, there can be no repentance and faith. How can they be born without the germ?

It would, indeed, appear to my mind an insuperable obstacle; and I should be compelled to reject Baptism as a Sacrament, unable to take the place of Circumcision, in its applicability to infancy, were it not that that passage of our Lord's assertion comes to my mind, in which he declares, that these are those "who need no repentance."* Never was there the adult of whom this could be declared, I am well assured. But of childhood—holy, pure, undefiled infancy—it may be, and it is true. There, the implanted germ of God's Spirit, given unto the undying monitor which we call conscience—there that germ exists, in its pure, holy activity, unquenched, undefiled, and ready, with the new birth, to carry on the new existence. Original sin, (its sad, inherited possession) is not that which calls for a personal repentance; and the guilt of its power is purged through the Covenant work, by the blood of the One Sacrifice. Repentance, then, is *not* required as the indication of the quickening power in infancy; nor is it needed. Faith, on the other hand, is guaranteed and pledged by those who are the sureties, and who manifest that faith in bringing the infant unto Baptism—a faith as really appertaining to it, in a prospective benefit, as the life

* Luke, xv. 7.

which it draws from its mother's breast. Then, offered in the purity of the undefiled germ, in the communicated and participated faith of the parental obedience, Baptism becomes to it the new birth indeed ; the sprinkling of water—the washing of regeneration indeed.

This, then, is the initiation into the Truth ; this the beginning and outset of that holy, heavenly existence, drawn from JESUS—the Way, the Truth, the Life. By this means, I may draw near to my God—consecrate myself unto Him—receive the pledge of salvation—be born into a new world—and then become an heir of everlasting life. So, too, may I bring my child, in his pure infancy, and consecrate him to my God, as fully as the Jew of old brought his child into the Covenant, and, through Circumcision, sealed him unto the promised mercy. Yes ; and although, alas ! to my child, with his natural life, I am the source of original corruption ; yet I see how, by my faithful obedience, I may place him in covenant with that Second Adam, who, through the laws of regeneration, shall beget him anew, and, washing away his natural turpitude, give unto him the spiritual strength by which he may “proceed from strength to strength, until to the God of gods he appears at Zion.”

Oh ! mercy transcendent ! Oh ! wisdom, skill, power, and love, beyond aught of human ken ! how shall my humble soul adore ! As I gaze upward into the deepening vault of heaven—far, far into the immensity of space—my

soul, overborne with the gush of thankful love, can find no words to tell its joys ; but only with the blazing worlds, throbbing in their multitude the silent song of creation's praise—pierce the still air of night with the soul-fraught cry—

“ Oh, Jesus ! Lamb, once crucified
To take our load of sins away !
Thine be the hymn which rolls its tide
Along the realms of upper day.”



SOLILOQUY VII.

BREAD OF TRUTH.

IT is one of the blessings of a rural home, that the sights and sounds of suffering from want are scarcely ever experienced. It is around the swarming cities that misery of that kind hovers. Unless arising from the grossest vice, or the most shameless indolence, in a country place of our land, suffering from want is unknown. There may not be plenty and abundance. Very many comforts and conveniences of life, doubtless, are wanting. Nevertheless, the necessities of life are all within the power, and it is a pleasant thought, as I look abroad over the face of the country to-night, that I do not behold a home where there is not enough, and to spare, of food and clothing. I do not believe that, in the whole length of this valley, were we to search it this evening, there would be found a single hearth where the plaint of hunger, or the moan of want, could be heard; but in each and all, with satisfied necessities of the body, He giveth His beloved sleep.

How different, how sadly different, in the great city's boundary! How often my heart has ached, as, on the bit-

ter, freezing blast of winter, the moan of helpless and suffering childhood has been borne. How often my soul has bled, when the howling of the winter wind has been answered by the feeble wailing of some unhoused, unfed, and unclothed child, shrinking its way to a dreaded and loathsome hiding-place, in solemn mockery called its home ! How acute the pain with which, in the hurried mart, I have heard the plea, "Please, give me something to buy some bread," often false, often deceptive, no doubt ; and yet, how often deplorably true ! Alas ! for the necessities unmet, the wants unsatisfied, the hopes unfulfilled, which hang around thousands of city *homes*. Yet, why is it ? Did God make man in His own image, to suffer and starve ? Is it any part of His economy that a needy frame should be deprived of its necessities ? Or, did he create a body requiring constant supplies to preserve its strength and life, and yet withhold those supplies ? No ; not so. Man was created in God's image ; but he hath sought out many inventions. Earth can, as yet, yield food to all her children, if the accursed thirst for accumulation, and its strife, should be removed. As God first placed man to till the earth, as his duty and blessing conjoined ; so never has the position of man been bettered by change from that charge. They never wanted necessities who held that position. Fulfilling His *will*, He gives them bread enough.

I have been led to these thoughts more easily to-night, because my mind wishes to consider the provision of God

for His creatures. The question presents itself as one both temporal and spiritual. Does God provide for man? He created him. He provided for the growth and increase of the species. By His Providence, not one hour passes but is the record of the beginning of many lives. And does His Providence end here? Once launched into life, are their necessities forgotten by His power? Temporally, does God bring man into the world, and make no provision for his support, and leave him to starve or die, as a blind chance shall dictate? Spiritually—does he bring him, through a new birth, into a new world, and leave him then, helpless and unprovided for, to starve or die eternally? It is no light question. The first phase I have almost answered to myself. No man need suffer want, who is willing to place himself in the position for which he was created. As a tiller of the earth, in no country place need the industrious suffer. As an appendage to the human hive of struggling competition for wealth, he does not fulfil the Divine will in his creation, and can only expect to suffer. This is the answer to the temporal. Will it be different in the spiritual? That is what I wish to know, in order to carry on the examination which I have commenced.

I considered the beginning of spiritual life last evening. The sacred importance of Baptism, as the initiation into Truth, and so the commencement of a new existence was then clear to me. It was my discovery, then, that by Bap-

tism I am born into the new world—Covenant, Church, or Body of CHRIST ; in order to receive from Him my spiritual life and strength. Therefore, Baptism becomes my new birth, as by it I am placed in a new state, and brought into Covenant connection with GOD, and have given to me all the life-preserving power of the Spirit. This, I saw, was the benefit of that Sacrament, to every rightly-receiving soul. By this means, the soul of man is born into that new world, in which the Spirit of GOD, for a special help, surrounds the soul, as an atmosphere of life in its support. Therefore, like the new-born infant, all the powers of life and growth are opened to it—all the means of increase placed within its grasp. Nevertheless, the actual benefits of this new birth, in operative power, depend upon the existence of a vital principle as its antecedent. Unless the soul has been quickened by the implanted Spirit, to repentance and faith, the soul, although really born again, and made a member of CHRIST's Body, is yet dead and lifeless. So that the new creature—the new being which the Spirit of CHRIST is designed to form—can only be gained in a Baptism where such precious vitality is found. In other words: Unless repentance and faith be the moving causes for Baptism in the adult ; or innocence and freedom from actual sin leaving unmarred the Divine germ in the infant ; such Baptism, although a new birth, does not secure a new life.

All this, I think, I understand as the initiation into

Truth, and the beginning of life. But this leads me on to the next necessary question which I just asked myself. Is this all? Does the Providence of God end here? Is a means of life provided, and nothing more? There is, evidently, something wanting. I know that it is not enough that the infant be born into the world, even though vitality and strength accompany its birth. It must be nourished and strengthened. It must grow and increase to the stature and vigor of manhood. It must be nourished and supported, or else it will die, and its just gained existence cease. It is the same spiritually. The Body of CHRIST must supply this to His children. Not only must she, through Him, give them life, but she must continue that life. It is not sufficient that she, through the Spirit of JESUS, bring them into a new world, a holy condition; but she must feed, strengthen, and support. Hence I infer, that CHRIST, when appointing His Church, must have given more than the Sacrament of Baptism unto her. He must have made provision for the after-growth and maturity of His children, and given somewhat to be their constant spiritual food and nourishment; in which day by day strengthened, day by day renewed in the inner man, they may at last attain the perfection of manhood in CHRIST.

Under this impression, it does not surprise me to find the second Sacrament coming in, as a necessity for spiritual life. This it is which nourishes the soul. From

this is derived the spiritual strength increasing every day. Through this holy channel is conveyed continually, according to their need, unto all the members of CHRIST, that Spirit of wisdom, of knowledge, of strength, of holiness, which must renew them daily—must minister constantly to their maturing grace, and nourish them up to everlasting life.

Such is the analogy of the case. From this, it is plain to me that I should find the Holy Communion to be an integral part of the Church, as a note and token of the same. Unless, then, any Body, or religious society professing to belong to the Unity of the Truth, can show such a means of care and nourishment for those born unto CHRIST, I cannot admit its claim. Unless I find such a religious Body continually teaching the importance of that sacred channel of life—constantly affording the nourishment of its spiritual food—such a Body does not possess the Truth, in its constancy, and fails in a most important mark of the Church of CHRIST. If this be the case, I am prepared to say, further, that any Society holding the mere commemorative virtue of the Holy Communion, cannot claim unity with the Truth. No mistake can be more deeply dangerous than this, I am persuaded ; no error strike a more fundamental blow. It matters not how much Baptism may be valued and insisted on, as the beginning of spiritual life, if the Holy Communion is lowered to a mere remembrance of CHRIST and outward sign of membership. In such a case

there is no provision whatever for the new-born being ; there is no spiritual food, strength, or nourishment found ; there is an utter want of any visible, outward channel, to become the pledge and token of an inward grace, ministered day by day, according to the necessities of the soul, and by which the life begun in Baptism may be carried on. Such a system of religion is, therefore, entirely deficient in the Unity of Truth. It has no harmony with any of the other governments of God. It runs counter to every other provision of His mercy in the sustentation of life.

However, it is not sufficient that I insist upon the point of *Unity* alone. I desire to appeal to the Divinity of Truth also, and see if the Word of God sustains the position I have reached, that the Holy Communion in its spiritual power, must be one mark of the Church of CHRIST.

There is a very strong passage respecting this, in the Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians. He writes:—
“Whosoever shall eat this bread and drink this cup of the LORD unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the LORD.”* Not a mere commemorative act, evidently ; not a simple sign and evidence of membership, surely ! Rather, I should say, something exceedingly solemn and important ; for, if it were only the *memory* of CHRIST to be preserved, what would be the difference between the worthy and the unworthy participation ? Would not the memory of CHRIST’s suffering and death be as much presented to

* 1 Cor. xix, 27.

mind by an unworthy participant celebrating them, as by the worthy? Would not the death of CHRIST be “showed forth” as fully in the celebration of the Holy Communion, (if *that* were all its purpose,) by one unprepared to come, as one prepared? Most certainly; and unless there were some deep, spiritual purpose in the receiving of the Holy Communion, beyond the simple recollection of CHRIST in the Church, how could the Apostle say, as in the next verse, “He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation unto himself:” then, adding, “For this cause, many are weak and sickly among you,” in spiritual life; “and many sleep,” in sin. In considering, however, the guilt incurred by the profane celebration of the Holy Communion, I can more clearly make it out by referring to the language of the Redeemer Himself, concerning spiritual life. His declaration is, “Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.”* This, we are distinctly told, had not any natural reference; and I find our LORD explaining to the Jews immediately after, —“It is the *Spirit* that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing.” Then, if I look at the last solemn act of the Saviour’s life, I may see more readily how this spiritual food was to be conveyed; for at that time, instituting the Last Supper Covenant, He said, as He brake the bread and

* John, vi. 53, 54.

gave the wine, "This is my body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of me." "Drink ye all of this; for this is my blood of the New Covenant, for the remission of sins. This do, as oft as ye shall drink it, in remembrance of me."* Not that the bread and wine were His body and blood in the natural sense; for He had before declared that by these terms He meant the Spirit, as the flesh profited nothing. Therefore, in these words I understand that by that bread and wine, He intended to convey spiritual meat and drink; as He had said that His body was "meat indeed, and His flesh drink indeed." Viewing it thus, I gain a clear light upon the Apostle's meaning; and I cannot for a moment doubt that the guilt of an unworthy participation, as not discerning the LORD's body, lay in the violating and perverting a channel of spiritual food unto a sign of condemnation, by a dead, faithless heart. This also makes clear to me the full nature of the Holy Eucharist, instituted by the Redeemer Himself, as the second Sacrament of His Body. I see that it was given as a precious legacy of Christ, to His Church, for the special purpose of supporting the spiritual life drawn from Himself, as the purchase of His Atonement and death. Thus, spiritually taken, the bread and wine becomes to the soul of man which has been born anew in Baptism, the means by which it receives the extraordinary helps of His grace, to continue its existence, to perfect its holiness, to

* Luke, xxii. 19, 20.

increase its development and power. By that solemn act, through a devout faith, in deep repentance and ardent love, the soul feeds upon the Spirit of CHRIST as fully, nourishingly, really, as the body does upon the bread and wine. And, as that holy spirit was only obtained by the body and blood of CHRIST, sacrificed on the Cross—an inestimable purchase—therefore that bread becomes to us really the body of CHRIST, in its value; the blood of CHRIST, that wine, in its worth. They represent these unto us—nothing less; and if I draw near unfitly, if I come impenitently—pollutedly—I do not draw near only to bread and wine; but am thus guilty of the body and blood of CHRIST; for I offend against the HOLY GHOST, by bringing it into a temple unholy and impure; and such I am told “the LORD will destroy.”* Therefore, I eat and drink damnation unto myself.

But here arises in my heart a question of anxious eagerness. *How* is all this done in the Holy Communion? How is this commemoration of the death of CHRIST united with so solemn spiritual benefits? This I must more closely examine; and I therefore observe it to be a two-fold effect, as a *sacrifice* and a *feast*.

1. It is an effectual Sacrament, inasmuch as it is a sacrifice; and this sacrifice itself, of a double nature, as real and as typical.

It is a *typical* sacrifice, because in it we do “show forth the LORD’s death until He come.”† There never was but

* 1 Cor. iii. 17.

† 1 Cor. xi. 26.

one true and availing sacrifice—even that which I have before considered, the Great Sacrifice of the death of CHRIST, at the middle point of the world's history—effectual to the remission of sin. Nevertheless, in both the Church before and the Church since the coming of CHRIST, the benefits of that death were drawn unto men, through appointed channels, as *types* of the same. Thus, in the first dispensation, animal sacrifice was appointed, as a type of the One Sacrifice of CHRIST. Not that the blood of bulls or of goats could take away sin; but only as a type of the one perfect offering, in faith of God's promise, it became effectual in procuring the pardon of sin. Hence the slaughtered animal, its broken body, its poured out blood, was a sacrifice typical of the Holy one to come; and *through it alone* obtained the promises built upon that Truth of God. The same is it with the retrotype of the Christian Church. It is a spiritual sacrifice, typical of the slaughtered Lamb, and looking back to Him. The broken bread, the poured-out wine, are a sacrifice typical of the broken body and shed blood of that Holy One through whom alone cometh the forgiveness of sins. These emblems, therefore, show forth His death, not in a barren memory, neither by a simple recollection; but really and truly as a representation of CHRIST, the body and blood are a typical sacrifice.

So likewise is this Sacrament a *real* sacrifice; that is

to say, in the same sense as were the animal sacrifices of the Jew, real. They were real sacrifices, from the fact that the animal slain was truly and entirely offered and devoted to the glory of God. The life of the victim was consecrated to the offended majesty of the Almighty, and it was, therefore, presented as the confession that such death was the proper punishment of sin. In the same manner, at the Holy Eucharist, the emblems of Bread and Wine are consecrated unto God, and with them, the Life, Body, and Soul, of the worshipper, are offered up to the Most High. In that oblation, the Christian worshipper offers and presents himself, soul and body, to be a reasonable, holy, and living sacrifice unto God, declaring that all he is, and all he has, he there, through CHRIST, does really sacrifice unto God.

2d. It is also a *feast*. Not only am I to view this Sacrament as a sacrifice, typical and true, thus preserving the unity of the Truth, for the conveyance of spiritual life; but I must see it as a feast—a feast to the soul. This is the light in which I first examined it, as being the source of spiritual existence. Through its sacrificial character at every celebration, remission of sin is obtained, and pardon and cleansing is secured; but through its festive character alone does it promise help and strength to the soul. Therefore is it a feast. By it, the life begun in Baptism, is matured. The infancy of spiritual life is developed and perfected. Constantly, as by besetting sin and original in-

firmity, that life becomes decayed, is the spiritual source renewed and increased. The image of CHRIST becomes more perfectly stamped in the soul. It grows in grace. It increases in knowledge. It perfects in love. It advances in holiness. It progresses in life. The soul partaking constantly of the Holy Spirit through that blessed feast upon a sacrifice, receives more and more the indwelling of the Godhead. With every participation, its hidden life of CHRIST * is confirmed. By the forgiveness of its sin, and restoration to the justification of Baptismal purity, a spring of new life is again and again imparted, and thus, by that very growth, hunger and thirst are roused, and the more it partakes of that holy food, the more keen becomes its relish and desire for its participation. It hungers and thirsts after a righteousness not its own, but given in that blessed sacrifice. Therefore, it longs to wait thus upon the LORD for a renewal of its strength; and, by Faith, by Love, by Divine rapture in the Holy Communion, it exults in that Heavenly banquet, and rejoices in that more than Angels' food. Thus fed again and again in that Holy Sacrament, nourished in that real, typical sacrifice, it goes from strength to strength, in spiritual life, until to the God of Gods appeareth that life-filled soul in Zion.

Now, indeed, I see how solemnly necessary is this sacrament to the test of the Church. Can she be true if she stint and starve her children, even after she has given

* Col. iii. 3.

them birth through Holy Baptism? Can it be anything but a mockery of the wants of the soul, when she brings her children to the table of her spouse, and tells them—not to feed in soul, not to fill their hungering spirits with the precious food of Heavenly Grace; but only to picture the dying of their LORD, and remember that they are brethren? Oh! does *this* nourish the inner life? Is *this* the unity and harmony of all God's actions? Is it *thus*, that He carries on life in any other operation? No—truly no! If the Church be indeed the spouse of CHRIST, she must feed His children with that Heavenly food which her spouse died to obtain. He died for His own. He poured out His blood only, in order that those He loved, the children of His bride, should be nourished up unto everlasting life; and, oh! I am sure that if she be true to Him, she will not starve them with the mere picture of what He has suffered, the mere resemblance of His death; but she will gather them, with bitter tears of repentance, with sobs of heart-broken love, around that Saviour's board; and while she tells them how He died, who loved them unto the end, and bids them remember the exceeding great love of their Master and only Saviour CHRIST, in thus dying for them, she will give them all the treasures of that sacred gift, and bestow upon them the blessed Body and Blood of CHRIST—bid them be filled with the HOLY GHOST—declare to them His precious promises—tell them how, then and there, they may feed upon Him, and that to

their souls His flesh is meat indeed—His blood is drink indeed.

This is the Body of CHRIST, which I seek. Such must she be in whom I hope to be brought near to my God. The true spouse—the faithful mother—the guide of my soul unto CHRIST. He the Head, and through her, all in all, to my soul—JESUS the beloved—“the Way, the Truth, and the Life!”

SOLILOQUY VIII.

COMMUNION OF SAINTS.

How often have I repeated the words of the Apostles Creed in the House of God—"The Holy Catholic Church, the Communion of Saints!" Have I fully understood it? I fear not. So very much has opened upon my mind, during these last few evenings of heart-communing, that it seems as though I never before realized the meaning of the words. I believe I now perceive what an intensity of signification there is in the first part of the article. I think I do really understand the sacredness of that Body of CHRIST, called His Church. I have settled to my satisfaction the notes or marks of that Church, according to the Truth of God. I have found them in the Divinity, Unity, and Constancy of the Word, the Ministry, the Sacraments. Each of these I have tested and considered, until I see distinctly what must be the Constitution of her who is the spouse of CHRIST. Will it not be well for me, as a concluding consideration, to ponder upon the whole thus offered as a Communion of Saints, and see what is contained in that Truth? I believe it will

“The Holy Catholic Church, the Communion of Saints.” This is one and the same article. Not two distinct and separate thoughts, but simply one. The Communion of Saints, as given in the Catholic Church, and the Catholic Church as proved in the Communion of Saints. Yet, what is the meaning of that term, Communion of Saints? I must review the other point. The Church of CHRIST is the Truth of GOD, and the one vast system of the forgiveness of sins, through the atonement of CHRIST, sealed and conveyed in the two sacraments, administered by a duly authorized Priesthood—this is termed the Universal, or Catholic Church, and is made up of the various and numerous local divisions or portions, as the Greek, Roman, Anglican, American branches of the same body. It is not, then, in any one of those bodies itself that I can predicate the fact of the Communion of Saints. It is not in that they are Roman or Greek, Papal or Episcopal, that I can make the assertion, that in them is the Communion of Saints. This Communion arises simply from their being Members of the Body of CHRIST, united to that Holy Body, which must be undivided Truth throughout the world. I cannot then claim the Communion of Saints, because I am a Papist, or because I am an Episcopalian, or because I am an Anglican, or a Greek member. The only defensible claim must be, that I am a member of the Body of CHRIST, and, therefore, in unity with that Universal Body. Hence it is the great and glorious privilege of the Church of

CHRIST to give this Communion of Saints, not because we unite with this or that portion, or branch of the Church, as if *it* alone contained that Communion; but because we receive rightly—partake truly—of those Holy Sacraments, by which we obtain the atonement of JESUS, and in which the precious blessings of His sacrifice and death are sealed and conveyed unto mankind. Such sacraments initiate us into the Holy Fellowship of the sacred company of the elect of GOD.

I see this clearly in the language of the Apostle, concerning the Eucharist. “The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the Communion of the Blood of CHRIST; the bread which we break, is it not the Communion of the Body of Christ, for we being many are one bread and one body, being partakers of that one bread.”* By these words, I conceive, the Apostle intends to set forward the fact, that, by partaking of the consecrated bread and wine, and so by Faith, being recipients of the Spirit of CHRIST, they were one with Him, and also one, each with the other, through Him. In this lay their Communion. Not in the fact that they were members of the same portion of the Church at Corinth. They were partakers of the same Grace of CHRIST—nourished by the same spiritual food—inheritors of like spiritual blessings, and drawing the same life, from the same source of life. This was their Communion. Then, again, if I examine the first part of a

* 1 Cor. x. 17.

succeeding chapter, I see with equal distinctness, that the other Sacrament of Baptism is made a source of unity and connection between the members of the Body of CHRIST, for the Apostle writes—"By one spirit, we are all Baptized unto one body, whether we be Jew or Gentile—whether we be bond or free; and have all been made to drink into one spirit."* By which words, I have placed before me the truth of the Communion of Saints—their oneness and completeness in the Faith of CHRIST, as sealed through the Baptismal Covenant. Their Baptism is presented, therefore, as a ground of unity, by which, also, they receive the Communion of Saints. Saints—not indeed by a sinless perfection; but Saints, according to their calling of God †—according to their purpose in the Church—according to the longing and desire of their hearts.

It is very necessary that this should be impressed upon my mind, because no idea is more common (nor more erroneous) than that, which would make the Communion of Saints to be derived from the secular relations of that religious body to which individuals may chance to belong. So I have often heard of this or that "religious Communion"—or such an one "not being of *our own* Communion"—or this or that "Communion being broken up." According to such a view, the Communion of Saints would be the union which they have, one with another, through a profession of like views and similar religious impressions.

* Cor. xii. 13.

† Peter, i. 2; 2 Tim. i. 9.

Not such the true union of Saints. *This* union is their participation in the one Body of CHRIST, and deriving the same life. It will not be difficult to find an illustration. The union is precisely the same as in the earthly family, where the relationship is not founded upon any individual resemblance, or similarity. The relation and consequent union of brother or sister, does not depend upon personal likeness. They are not brother or sister, because they have the same tastes and feelings—or because they resemble each other. They may not do so in the least. Their views and opinions may be exceedingly different; and yet they are one in the home, because they have a common source of existence. Their parents are one—their homes one—their support and nourishment, until maturity—is one. Thus it is in the Communion of Saints; its integrity has no reference to a sectional portion of the Body of CHRIST, nor to the views and feelings of those composing that body; it is the common birth into CHRIST that begins it—the true participation of the Holy Communion which continues it—and thus the Sacraments are the source, as the Church is the ground, of that Communion.

And what are the results of that one life—that vast, united, and yet multiplied, spiritual existence, flowing unto all the innumerable members of CHRIST's Body? What are the blessings of that Communion of Saints?

The blessings resulting from a unity in Faith, in Hope, in Love. A union in *Faith*, for one and all believe that

through the sacrifice and precious death of CHRIST alone, is life and immortality brought to light by the Gospel. All believe, that only through CHRIST the crucified, are their sins forgiven, their pardon sealed ; and that they are Baptized only through His Blood, unto the remission of sins. All believe, that only in Him, and by Him, comes salvation to any soul that shall be saved. Into this one Faith, all throughout that vast company, are baptized, and with one mouth they profess to believe.

It is also a union of *Hope*. From the one Head (holding fast His spirit) they all draw their common life by the joints and bands of Holy Sacraments, through a Divine Ministry ; and therefore, they must as such, expect a common joy, in one united Eternal Home. Ransomed together by JESUS' blood, and living in soul by the operation of His spirit, they look for a common hope of Eternal glory ; they expect the same precious reward, the same gracious fellowship of the mercy of God, even Eternal Life to as many as believe in Him.

So also is it a unity of *Love*. Being partakers of the same spiritual existence, and filled with the same Divine mind—it accords and agrees with the same image in another mind ; and whether “one member suffers, all the members suffer with it ; or whether one member rejoices, all the members rejoice with it.”* Subject to like temptations, trials, and cares, their sympathies and affections go

* 1 Cor. xii. 26.

out toward each other in an Holy Love; not, indeed, because of altogether similar views; neither because of peculiar, individual, or personal agreement—not because there is any social connection between them; but from the one great ground, a common Father—source of Life—and they Brethren in Him. They may differ in taste—may vary in feeling—may have little similarity in views; but in that Holy Love they are one. Partakers of the same blessed Sacraments, and so born unto, and nourished by that one Head, even CHRIST, they will be drawn each toward the other in a powerfully impelling source of union. All looking unto the same Baptism as the beginning of their spirit life, and prizing it as the precious Covenant of their new promise; all drawing near to the same Holy table, (spread throughout the world by the same love,) and feeding upon CHRIST, and partakers of His Body and Blood—they are one indeed, united in a blessed Communion—wherever they may be—however they are situated—for “they being many, are one body, being partakers of that one bread,”* and they dwell in CHRIST, and He in them.

Here, however, an objection arises in my mind. An objection which may be made, and often is made, to the whole outline of the Church, which I have so far considered. It is an objection which often is triumphantly proposed as an effectual hindrance to the believer of the Church's claims. It is this. If the view thus

* 1 Cor. x. 17.

taken, be correct, and if the Church of CHRIST, possessing a lawfully ordained ministry, and being Divinely constituted with two sacraments for the conveyance of spiritual life—if this Church is the only appointed means of salvation, and there is no real spiritual life out of this system—what shall become of the numerous religious bodies, not possessing such a constitution, and not belonging to this Communion of Saints? There are, certainly, belonging to them, many good and pious persons; are they lost? Do they really have no spiritual life? Does their error shut them out from any participation in soul-existence? This is a very solemn question, and this objection very often leads many to reject the teaching of God's Word, concerning the Church, as the appointed means of salvation. Shall I be compelled to do so? No. I am to follow Truth wherever it leads. Is this any *concern of mine*? If I am satisfied of what is the Truth of God's will, does it concern me to settle any other difficulties? It would appear not. Therefore, even if compelled to make this issue, I believe I have no right to reject the Truth for its consequences. However, is it not possible to see any way by which such an issue can be avoided? I must, most attentively, consider this.

Now, although I *have* learned to look upon the Church of CHRIST, that is, the Holy company of faithful people, bound together in the two Sacraments, and administered by a Divinely appointed Priesthood, as the one true means of

spiritual life for man, and so of salvation ; although I *have* come to see that the life of the soul is carried on by the Spirit of CHRIST, through the Body of which He is the Head, in a regular harmonious system—exactly in the same manner as bodily life in the natural world ; and thus that the figure used by the Saviour is true, and that unless we are branches of the Vine, *according to His law* we *cannot* have true spiritual life ;—although I have reached all this, yet let me pause here, for I cannot but believe that there are good and holy persons, who are not members of that one true Church ; and out of those appointed Sacraments who *do* have spiritual existence. And yet how ?

This I must answer by another question. Have I any doubt at all concerning the irrevocable law and order of God, in the conveyance of natural life ? Scarcely. If I look at the tree, growing in the field, I will not hesitate to say, that it *must* conform to the fixed law of God, to obtain life. It must possess at once, root, stem, branches, leaves, and ministering sap ; without these, it cannot live. Pluck up its root, and it dies. Cut off the branches from the trunk, and they perish. I speak very positively and decidedly, for I am very sure. This is the God-ordained system of the natural life. And yet what is my experience ? How often has it happened to me that in the sweet, budding spring-time, I have gone forth and plucked from the garden's treasures, some tender branch, teeming

with numerous, and more than common, promises of flower? Its delicate beauty attracted me, and its profuse display of scarce developed buds, led me, carelessly, and yet perhaps intentionally, to sever it from its stalk. I broke it from its parent stem, and thus severed the connection with its true, God-ordained system of life, and—it died, did it not? No—*perhaps* not. I carried it, perhaps, to my home—I valued its beauty, and longed to see those delicate leaves unfold, and learn their hue and shade. I carefully guarded it. I placed it in a warm and genial spot; I afforded a copious supply of water to the broken stem, and offered it the cherishing rays of the smiling sun, and then—I saw it *live*. I watched it day by day unfold—the bud became a blossom—the flower expanded and opened forth into a fragile beauty. Now, what should I call this, which I have so often seen? It is *life*—is it not? Yes—but what kind of life? Is it regular—just—true—healthful—life, according to God's creative law? No! It is irregular—it is uncertain. As I placed that branch into the fostering water, I said to myself, perhaps "It *may* live, and it may not." Its life is a struggle against ordinary laws. It lives under a difficulty or pressure, surrounded by uncertainty and doubt. So long as it remained attached to the parent stem, there was no doubt. If it were externally uninjured, it *must*, certainly, bud and blossom. It is the same with the Sacred Vine of which CHRIST is the Life. That is the only true and ordained channel of spiritual

life; and yet there *may* be life spiritual, in those who are cut off from that unity, the true body and the true sacraments. They *may* live unto God; but it is not according to His appointed system. It is irregular—it is precarious—it is difficult. There is not in it the health, the vigor, nor strength, of the true and ordained means. It is a *forced* life, requiring all the hot-bed stimulus of excited feelings—frenzied raptures—paroxysms of emotions—convulsions of frame, and enthusiasms of passions. Therefore, it is a feeble, troubled, uncertain life—filled with temptations and snares, such as only a schism from the Body of CHRIST can present.

I do not, then, feel compelled to the issue before contemplated. I see how, by a figure, we may understand the *possibility* of life being continued and contained, out of the ordained organic law, and yet that possibility not doing away with the fearful precariousness of any such position.

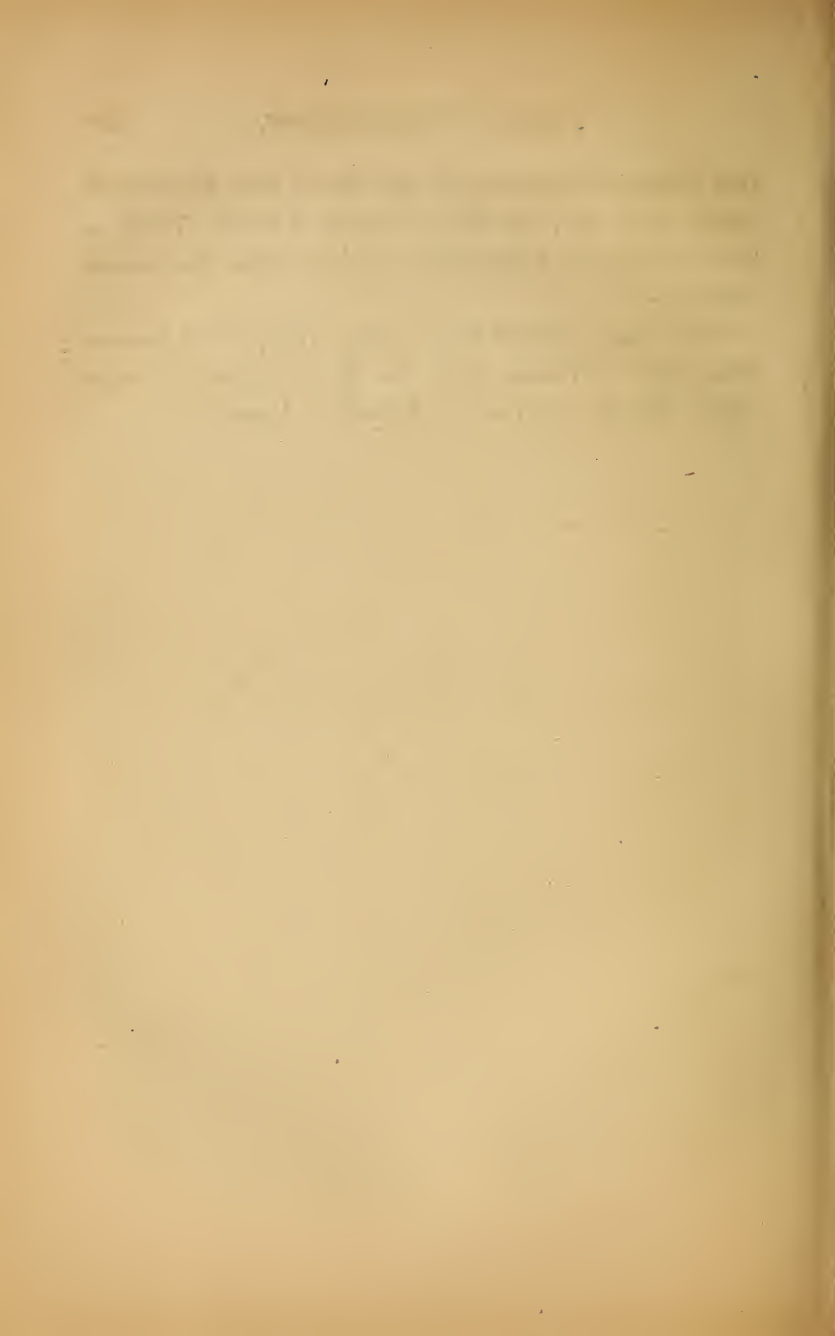
This thought, then, may justly conclude these, my meditations; and, with the Communion of Saints, as the blessed fullness of the Body of CHRIST opened before me, I may rest my heart. Now all my path is clear as a deep soul-union with God—in the life of Truth. Now, at last, I behold light, and that Divine, United, and Constant, as the light of the Holy Word. Now spiritual life stands before me, an awful, sacred reality; not a separate—individual—

personal excitement of feeling, in so-called religion; but as a Holy, glorious union with CHRIST, in the Communion of Saints. Blessed are they who have discovered this wisdom of God, called foolishness of men! How purely they may live—how calmly, sweetly die! How uncontaminate with the world may they be—how free from its debasing cares may they exist! Living in their spiritual world; wrapped up, not in self, sense, or gain, but in the Love and service of God; the earth intermeddleth not with their joy. And when the world has drawn the curtain over her gorgeous phantoms, and closed up for the dark night of the tomb all the fantastic pictures of her short life's-day; then calm and bright will shine the glory of that Eternal Life—the sweet comfort of the Church of CHRIST—living—speaking beyond the tomb; and then the promise shall soothe even the dying heart—"I will raise them up at the last day." Yes! and even after death—when the sleeping form is softly laid in its parent earth—then still shall the voice of her love come to comfort the soul, with her sweet-whispered words of consolation and joy—"Blessed are the dead who die in the LORD"—and light, life, and immortality cast their glow o'er the grave.

Shine on, then, ye stars! Quiver and shoot, ye glittering Heavens! Tell out His works with gladness; but never shall ye tell a thousandth part of the Truth of

God, whereby Righteousness and Peace have kissed each other; and, oh! my heart, brought by that Truth so near to God; in unutterable adoration, take thee words and cry—

“For Thou only art Holy—Thou only art the LORD—
Thou only, O CHRIST, with the HOLY GHOST, art most high in the glory of GOD the FATHER. Amen.”



II.

H O M E T R U T H S .

“Sacramentum Paschæ in Exodi lege nihil aliud continet quam ut agnus qui in figura Christi occiditur in domo una edatur. Nec alia ulla credentibus præter unam Ecclesiam domus.”

S. Cyprian de Unit. Eccles., p. 110 et 182.

HEART AND HOME TRUTHS.

SOLILOQUY I.

H O M E .

MY Home! How sweetly does that word sound! I love to speak it out in its round fullness thus, and call it—Home! How innumerable are the tender associations which the word calls up; and how lingering is the regret which shadows its loss! “There is no place like Home,” says the truest as well as the sweetest of all sweet ballads, and was there ever a man who possessed a Home, unwilling to make the assertion his own?

I feel it to be so to-night; and as I sit within the compass of these walls, which enclose all now forming my Home, it is no insignificant part of the pleasing calm brooding over my spirit, to think that I am at Home, and so at rest.

But what is Home? Four walls? A plot of ground? Furniture? A family? Friends? Sleeping and eating?

My mind turns away from each of these in their separation—some with contempt, and some with hesitation; yet still from all with denial. It is not every man who has a family, or a house—furniture, or friends—who has a Home; if he have them alone. Home presents to my mind a much deeper signification. It is a peculiar and incommunicable glory, dwelling in, and hovering around that spot, which is simply the retreat of loving and united hearts, from a cold and heartless world.

Home, therefore, implies to my mind necessarily—heart. Indeed, the Home is, in relation to the world, what the heart is to the body. The deepest and most sacred, hidden portion of its being. The purifying, as well as sustaining influence of all the corporate intricacies. It is the Home which must purify the whole current of life rushing to and fro, through the unwieldy bulk of society, even as the heart must, by its action, pour forth and receive, the alternately pure and impure currents of the blood in the body of man. But even were the figure worthless, I know the fact remains. A heartless man, according to the usual meaning of that term, knows not Home. The sweet influences, the hallowed associations, the tender ties which glorify the Home, have no power over him. He will scorn a Home, because there is in him nothing answering to its voice. He will slight its influence and despise its claim.

Therefore it is, that the more debased the mind and

heart, the less perception is there of the sweetness of Home. The more degraded a society of men, and the more lacking in either purity or intelligence, the less value is placed among them upon the severance and sanctity of the Home. They are lacking in what we call heart; and where the affections are either dead or polluted, there the lines and boundaries of the Home are prostrated.

Now, is this all? Is *Home* a conventionality? Does it simply depend upon a state of society—or is it something higher and above, as a will of the Creator? An institution—does it show itself—given by our God?

Alas! alas! it has become a conventionality! In the thousands, and ten thousands of Homes, upon which I might look this night, with how few would I find Home to be anything more than the constitution of society, more or less refined, as the affections are more or less purified? Looking through never so many shades of feeling and affections for Home—where would I find any coming up to that hallowed height—Home, as the gift of God? How many should I see, by their deep attachment to it, and their solemn guidance of it, recognizing the Home to be a Divine Institution—God's type in imperfect Earth of the coming glory of that Home, which is perfect Heaven!

The thought is painful to me. Very. I stop in my meditation. A weight comes upon my spirit. Is there nothing real in merely human happiness, apart from a Heavenly principle? I would answer the question; but

my eye catches the gleaming of the moon on the white, steady, glistening tombstones, studding yonder burying-ground, and—the question is answered. *That* ends all! Put it at the best; wreath round your Home, my heart, the ruddiest visions of purified Love that you can invoke; make it sweet—call it real—and yet, how long before that Home shall end—there?

Now the voices of my little children come up to my ear as they sport with their merry games in the room below. A choking sensation rises in my throat, and my heart appears as though lead in my breast. I lean my hot cheek against the cool window-panes, and gaze outward upon the scene spread before me in the mellow moonlight. It is cold to-night, and very brightly fall those rays upon the grave-yard tombstones. Why is it that I can see nothing else? Why is it, that as the merry shouts of laughter come up to my ears, and those sweet childish voices ring so clear upon my hearing, I still can only see the dark sombre foliage waving in heavy clusters over the white-topped graves? All ends there, I say to myself, half audibly:—The dearest Love—the fondest Home—the happiest childhood—the most united family circle—must come to that close. There is nothing *real* in human happiness, apart from a Divine principle. It must be either nothing, or all. What reality is there in a Home, however happy, which is only a Home for earth, enduring for a time? As I look to-night on those silent graves—as I

watch the long swinging locust limbs, cold and damp, performing the office of mourners, in the pale moonlight—can I forget that *they*, who lie beneath, once had Homes, as dear to them as mine is now to me? No. I well know that they, in their day, listened, with, perhaps, gushing fondness, to such childish voices as now greet my ears. They gathered their Homes around them—they exulted in their peace; but where is it now? Ah! tremendous question—where? This moon, which shone then so quietly on their joy, now shines as calmly on their grave, and their Love, and their Home—where?

I feel a thrill creep through my frame, at the thought which that suggests. Have they a Home now? Is there more than *one* Home? More than one? Yes—my Home now is not what was my Home once. That I well know. There was my first Home, which was my childhood's Home. This is now my second Home—the Home of my children's childhood—and, oh! what is that flashing thought—yes—I see it—there must be a third, a last Home, and that Home—where?

Oh! can it be that this is so, and that the Home is the Institution of our God, (in resemblance of His nature,) threefold in its progress and its power? May I really behold, the first and second Home, as only early stages, preparatory for, and typical of, the last Eternal Home, the presence of our God?


If this be true, indeed (and I begin to feel that it *is* true),

with what a fearful interest is the Home invested ! How far does it stand beyond a mere conventional decree ! What a solemn light shines upon the beauties of its rest ! Truly now I may say, the *hallowing* associations of a Home ; and as I behold this light, my heart yearns within me, to cry aloud to all—"Be warned ! Trifle not with your Homes. You have only two, indeed, for time ; but they are the types of one, which is to be the Home for Eternity !" Yes—and if I could lift my voice, so as to penetrate to every Home this night, I would say—"Oh ! parents, hear ! A fearful responsibility rests upon you. As the Home you have had, sets its stamp upon the Home you have now, so will this set its stamp upon that which is to come. 'This is not your rest.'* The only true Home lies in the Future. God gives the earthly to secure a better Heavenly reality. Strive, then, that the Present may indicate the Future in its Glory and Truth."

There can be, then, no reality of character in any Home falling short of such Divine standard. The Truth and the worth of any Home, must be found in its approximation to the character of that which is the Eternal one. Hence, Religious Life and Religious Truth are inseparable from its Constitution, and must be both generally and intimately connected with its existence. To be a true Home, capable of setting its stamp for the Eternal, it must be a Religious Home. It must not only be of God ; but for

* Micah, ii. 10.

God; and the religious life of its members must constitute the religious atmosphere of its unity. Heart-Truth must be the only foundation of its Home-Truth.

Here I see the error of very many. It is too common a thing to find those who profess to receive the Truth as it is in Jesus, restricting their religious profession to the narrow field of their personal action—their bosom feelings and emotions. They never travel out of the narrow circle of their individual experiences, habits, or hopes. Their religion is essentially, (I can call it nothing else) a selfish religion. They do not feel bound to extend their knowledge of the Truth to their Homes. They do not attempt to stamp the characteristics of their profession upon its surface. They are content to be brought near to God, as a personal relation, and in His Holy Church, through blessed Sacraments, they seem to be assiduous in cultivating the Truth of their own Christian character; but for their Home, that same Truth is neglected. It may, indeed,  affect their character in their Home. I have no doubt it does. It *must*. Nevertheless, that is not the point in question. That his knowledge of Heart-Truth does make a man more gentle, patient, upright, and consistent in his Home, is a blessing indeed; and when this is a change from a naturally fretful, hasty, impatient, tyrannizing temper, it is assuredly a blessed change. But even this is not enough. This does not give any character to the Home, as marking it for God, and as being the household

of the Christian. This does not fix upon it any Truth which shall exist beyond the grave. We know that many careless and worldly persons, possess, naturally, kind, patient, amiable tempers, and, then, where the difference between the Homes? Home-Truth is more than this; it is that which must possess a likeness to the Heavenly Home, and, therefore, must be the character of Heavenly Truth.

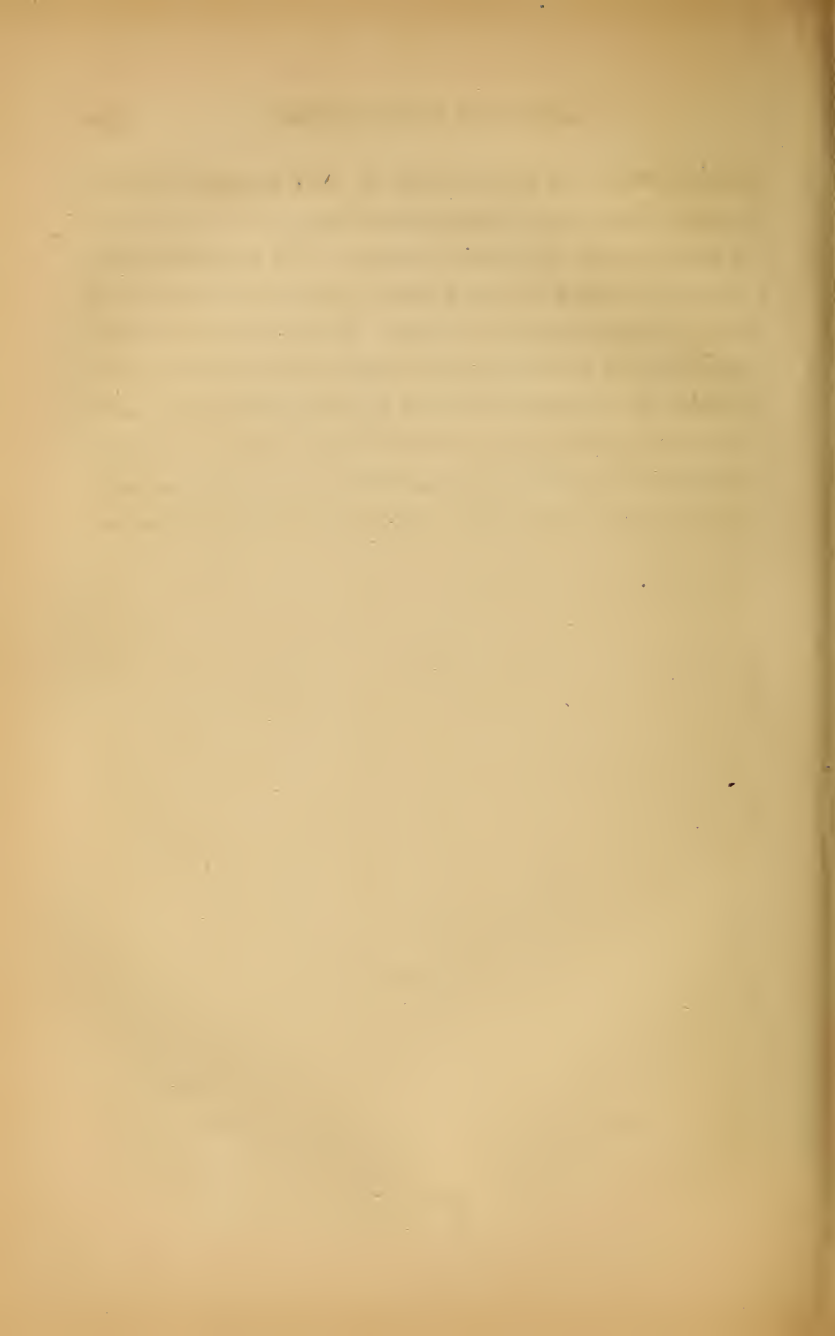
Such, and such only, I take to be a Home, in the fullness of that large term. It is that closer circle of heart-love (embracing Heart-Truth) which possesses the marked character of religious faith; and, by being wholly constituted in accordance with the Divine Will, becomes, by anticipation, a preparation for that one true Home, dawning in the light of the Sun of Righteousness, beyond the grave.

How blessed, how happy is the Home possessing such characteristics! To it, the grave is no destroyer, neither is death a foe; for, in the eternity of God, it will reach its perfect state, and find all its sweetness and its delights renewed, to their fullest and most complete degree. The love, the peace, the trust, the joy, which in it purified all that became cankered by contact with corrupted society, will be the unvaried constitution of its final development; and the grave prove only the gate to a larger garden of fuller delight.

Do I know any such? Alas! can I, with truth, answer to myself, yes? If I do, they are few and far-scattered.

And yet, why? Is Heart-Truth so little known? No;—but such Truth rarely touches the *Home*.

I must ponder this more closely. It is a solemn duty. If it were not so to my own heart and conscience, it is, I feel, to others beneath my care. Those innocent voices ringing in my ears, draw too strongly upon the strings of my heart, to let me forget that *my* second Home is *their* first; and, by the stamp which I place upon it, will be guided their progress to the second; and so fixed, perhaps finally, for them and for me—the third, last, Eternal Home!



SOLILOQUY II.

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES.

I now wish to examine faithfully into the nature and character of a true Home. I wish to see my own duty, and place before my mind the method by which the first and second Homes may be so resembled to the last Home, as to prepare for its coming. I desire to find in what manner Heart-Truth will secure to itself Home-Truth.

I before came to the conclusion, that the grand mistake commonly made, is the segregative character of religious profession carried on by so many. If the earthly Home is given by God, only as a type of the heavenly; and if the natural family is only an emblem of the spiritual family, of which He is the Head; then, assuredly, the one should be patterned after the other; and the love and peace which we hope to continue beyond the tomb, must be founded upon the same basis in the temporal, as we know it is founded in the eternal. A true Home, therefore, is a religious Home. Not a religious Home in *name*. How many of these have I not seen? But a religious home in deed. A home patterned after God's household,

the Church ; and so a Christian household—governed, guided, and fashioned in accordance to the Will of God.

Now, any household, to be a Christian one, must possess a positive and distinct character as such : that is to say, it must be evidently the household of a Christian—as Christianly, ruled ; as Christianly, conducted ; and carried on with a Christian aim. It must, therefore, be as different from a worldly household, as—a strong figure, it is true—heaven is from hell. Not in degree, of course ; but in purpose and position.

I think this is an unavoidable necessity, arising from the supposed reality of a man's profession. When an individual, the head of any household, assumes the vows of the Baptismal Covenant, and, ratifying them in Confirmation, proceeds to Holy Communion, he or she is supposed to mean what they say, and feel what they profess ; and when they declare that they renounce the Devil and all his works, the pomps and vanities of the wicked world, the evil lusts of the flesh, and that they will endeavor not to follow nor be led by them,—it is believed that they are in earnest in their declaration. Further : when they assert, in the celebration of the Holy Communion, that they offer and present themselves, their souls and bodies, to be a living sacrifice to God, I understand them to mean, that all they have, and that all they can do, they will really consecrate unto God, as wholly and entirely His.* Consecrate

* Rom. xi. 1.

quently, to carry out this declaration, their household and their homes must come under a new system. The household must be dedicated to God; and a holy purpose must be stamped upon all its duties and affections. What they before did upon a worldly principle, they are now to do upon a Divine one. The habits and customs before encouraged to assimilate with the world, they must now seek to assimilate unto heaven. The purpose which they before entertained, as diversely following up present gratification, they must now merge into a concentrated effort toward meeting the demands of their God.

I can see no other course than this for the attainment of any Truth in the Home. If a Christian profession is anything, it is all. It must, to the head of a family, strike first in its operation at the modelling of the household. If it is *not* anything, it were better never to be made. So I say, as I often have said before, to myself and others, if there is to be any Truth in the Home of the Christian, and if it is at all to resemble that which he hopes to possess in the eternal Home, it must possess features as markedly distinctive in their character as is his promise peculiar.

Now, these distinguishing characteristics of the Christian household are to be found, I think, chiefly in two points, by which it differs from the worldly household. It is perfectly clear to my mind, that, if in any family the *purpose* and *method* of living were different from that of the great majority, I could not fail to observe it. How quickly even small peculiarities of family traits strike my

eye! Even trifling points of temper and disposition, as extending through a family, become very noticeable. Of course, then, if the great *purpose* for which they live, and the whole *method* in which they live, were different in one family from most others, it would be as evident to me as the light of day—as perceptible as the path before me. From this I conclude that a Christian household should be distinguishable from any other in the *purpose* and *method* of its existence.

The purpose of the Christian household, is indicated by the purpose of its head to serve the LORD.* This duty is made the first great object of the Home. It must weigh constantly upon the mind of the Christian ruler of that Home. He can never lose sight of it. Toward this purpose, he seeks continually to bend the minds of all in that sphere. Religious and spiritual duties are held up as objects superior to all others; and the first place is always given to that which concerns the glory of God or the welfare of the soul. The head of such a family never fails to bear in mind that all the ordinary duties and occupations of the Home may be sanctified and made instruments by which the heart and mind may be spiritually elevated. Hence the constant aim is made the fulfilling of the *will of God*, and the unceasing purpose, is the effort toward the obedience of His commands.

Now the ordinary purpose of a household, it is quite

* Josh. xxiv. 15.

plain to see, declares itself in the endeavor after comfort, ease, or self-gratification; and as ministering to this, appearances are consulted, and accumulations made. All duties are accommodated to this object. The Home is cut and carved, according to the interests of temporal concerns, guided in its arrangements entirely by the rule of business and convenience. Everything is swayed, in the worldly household, by the appearances to be kept up; or moulded in accordance with their efforts for accumulation. Therefore, evidently, its purpose is to run along with the rest of the world as smoothly as possible, and to avoid, as far as can be avoided, differences from others.

Exactly opposite to this, is the formation of the true Home. All its plans, and each of its arrangements, will be found to have some reference to a holy object; and a religious duty, and spiritual responsibility, is clearly felt by all. Its ordering is fixed by the necessities of religious life. No rule or habit of the Home is allowed to be so settled, but what, if the glory of God, or the benefit of the soul, or the good of the Church require, it can be changed or modified. So that in looking at the working of this household, even casually, I can see at once that it differs from an ordinary Home. The will of God is exhibited to my sight, as the ruling power in it, and religious duties or pleasure, the one, supreme, absorbing interest within its spheres. I say to myself at once, seeing such, in that household both the business and the pleasure are

derived from the service of God. And this, too, *heartily*, as must be in a true Home, which is the abode of the heart. It springs necessarily from the sincerity of their religious profession who are at its head, and who realize that it is their solemn duty and privilege to lead all under their care to the obedience and recollection of God, in order that they and their house may serve the Lord.

And, furthermore, I am satisfied that this purpose will be so clearly manifested as to prevent any misconstruction on the part of others. It will not be anything confined to the boundary of that Home; but it will carry its object, unwaveringly, before the world. It will not be ashamed of its purpose. I think I have seen such instances of infirmity in distinctive features. Households where a religious purpose was limited to their interior economy, and not suffered to appear in their external relations, because likely then to appear strange. This *strange effect* is just what should be produced. Such is the very essence of characteristic purpose. Not only in the private home relation; but in the public, such a purpose must exhibit itself, as a real and positive character.

But, as the purpose and design cannot stand out by itself, therefore it is necessary that the purpose shall be made up of the *manner*; and the Christian household must be distinguished as an holy household, not only in the object for which they live, but by the manner in which they are guided.

Hence, such a Home I should expect to find distinguished by a constant and united acknowledgment of its connection with its God. It is not enough that each individual of that household shall personally fulfil that relation to God, implied by his or her Baptisinal Covenant; nor that, individually, he or she shall endeavor to carry on the soul-life, obtained through the Spirit of God; but, unitedly and collectively, as a household, that relation and connection is confessed. It forms a common bond of interest, and whatever may be the difference of taste or pursuit in other respects, here, and in this, I see them all gathered to a common centre. Therefore, daily, their collective dependence upon the Heavenly Father is acknowledged. Every morning is found to be a cause of united thanksgiving, and every evening a period of common confession and common praise. I therefore behold each day begun and ended, as a family, in approach to the Throne of Grace, and in the proclaiming of their purpose and object of life, as being the service of God. No excuses of business are ever allowed to interfere with this, nor any possible contingency to interrupt this sacred daily dedication of the Home unto the will and worship of the Most High.

Neither can I fail to notice, that the method of life adopted in such a household, would be one constantly presenting the position in which all stand personally to the Heavenly Father, and the vows and the obligations under which they all lie, as expectants of the heavenly Home.

I therefore see order and harmony enforced, not simply because disorder and contention are commonly thought disgraceful; but because such characteristics are contrary to the holy profession of that household. Gentleness and love are upheld, not merely from the fact that they are beautiful in themselves, but because they are sweetly pleasing in the eyes of a loving God, and absolutely essential to the possession of a Heavenly Home. Error and wrong are corrected or punished, not from the low principle of their vexatious character to the head of such an household; but upon the solemn ground, that they are offensive in the sight of that Holy God, whose will it is the great purpose of that Home to perform.

In this manner, all the members of that household are taught to feel that the greatest shame which they can experience, is to have offended against God, or to have done anything contrary to their Holy profession, as baptized in His name. An impression of the ever-present—all-seeing Eye—is gained; and the fact is thus realized, that each word and action comes under the notice of the Holy God. As a natural consequence, consistency (that blessed beauty of a religious profession) sheds its equable light upon this household serving God.

But, in painting all this to myself, am I not stretching it to an unearthly—marvelous—super-sensuous degree of spiritual exaltation? I think not. As far as I can see the matter, all that I have just been supposing, would arise simply and

unavoidably from an active and consistent operation of the religious profession of those who may be the heads of such a household. Whatever may be striking in its characteristics, is only their striking characteristics extended; and the general devotion of such a Home, is only the direct in-working of the devotion of its rulers, enlarged by its field. Such extension of effect must always be expected, whether for truth or falsehood. Hence, let the head of a household be variable and inconsistent in his or her religious profession—let a parent be weak or uncertain in the prosecution of his or her religious duty, and just so surely (unless, by the Providence of God, some other influence be exerted,) will that inconsistency be magnified in their household; just so surely will their Home fail in Truth as a Christian Home, and be entirely devoid of any distinctive feature marking it as a household, fearing God. If a parent has now and then fallen into a worldly way of calculating—if he has here and there yielded to a worldly policy—let him not be astonished, in after years, to wake up and find, that his Home has lost beyond recall the distinctive features of the Christian Home, and that, then, the world has by far the greater, if not the entire rule.

I see then, clearly, the necessity of stamping this character upon a Home, by means of a thorough personal consistency of religious profession. My religious belief must be a principle of life extending to my household. If I have embraced the Truth of CHRIST to the effect of a living

union with Him, I must make that Truth the principle of my Home, in all its vitality. Principle, did I say? What an important word! There is religious *feeling* common enough; but, alas! it is wrongly called religious *principle*. That only can be a principle, with me, which goes to the very root of all my feelings and actions, and leads to the unflinching consistency between what I do, and what I profess to do. Therefore, when I profess in the Holy Eucharistic Sacrifice, to offer and present myself, my body and soul, to be a holy and living sacrifice unto God, true principle would lead me to yield up everything really unto Him, and be willing to sacrifice any temporal benefit, in order to obtain the benediction of such Truth in my Home. If this were alway done, and if worldly considerations, and prudential calculations were utterly thrown out—its standards of appearances, or gauges of customs, were unvariably rejected—how much more common would become that greatest of blessings, Home Truth, the distinctive feature of a household serving God.

And yet, if I were to urge this upon the attention of Christian parents, what would be the probable reply? Why, this; that their Home is their own, and under their own control; that it is their personal concern to care how it is guided, and that others are not concerned in it. What a grave mistake! What a grievous error! Is a man's household his peculiar property? No! not if he has learned the Truth as it is in JESUS—not if he has,

by baptism, put on CHRIST—not if he belongs to the company of God's faithful people. It is by such profession made God's household, and he is open to the responsibility and duty of showing it as such. By membership with the Church, he and his are pledged to present those marks and distinctive features, which must constitute the Truth of his Christian Home. He is, therefore, responsible to the Church, and those composing her body, for this duty, and if he fail in it, he is defrauding her of her honor, and is responsible to her for the wrong.

But here the question arises to my mind, am I not lending to this point too great an importance, and attaching to it a value beyond what it will really bear? Is it really so intensely necessary that a distinctive religious character should be given to the Home? When I consider how fearfully large is the circle affected by a household, and what an incalculable amount of good or evil may result from one rightly or wrongly directed Home; I feel assured that it is necessary, and that I have not over-estimated its value. It is not a matter which may be allowed to adjust itself to its own position, or to follow the casual leading of circumstances. As I look around me in memory, and as I call up the events of past years, cannot I number many Christian parents who have had cause, in after life, to bewail their neglect of duty in their household, and the uncertain, indistinct nature of their religious guidance of the Home? Alas! how many souls have been lost—lives

ruined—hearts broken—homes shattered ; all from the *unintentional* neglect of the Christian character in the Home. Cannot I put my hand to-night on some individuals going the downward road to all ruin and shame ; whose course is the anguish unutterable of their parents' heart ; and yet whose first cause of error was the want of religious character in the Home ? Not want of religious character in the parents ! No ! not that ; but failure of consistency in that religion, from which resulted want of a clear, decided religious Truth in the Home. Yes, indeed, I am satisfied of this. It must be either one thing or the other. If a household is *not* marked clearly, boldly, and evidently, both in purpose and manner, by an unswerving, consistent, and Christian principle, so that the Truth of God shines on all its governing ; why, then, it is, it must be, a false Home, and can never, never lead to that eternal and last Home which is in the presence of God !

SOLILOQUY III.

ORGANIZATION OF THE HOME.

BUT, if it is marked, I say to myself—supposing that clearly and distinctly the features of a Christian Home are impressed—what then shall I find to be its further organization? How shall I see the working of that Truth manifested? This is a grave consideration; for the position of the head of a family is one replete with responsibility and care; and that responsibility must be met in all its fullness.

Yes, it is a solemn position to be the head of a household. To be chief among a small band of Christians, who look up to you for guidance, counsel, and direction; who regard your words with deference; and who, unconsciously both to themselves and you, take their tone of thought and feeling from that which you cultivate. This is, indeed, a solemn position; and if you are by profession a disciple of CHRIST, how much is that solemnity enhanced? There is no such thing as a private Christian. All men are mysteriously linked together by the bond of influence; and, if we do good to none, we are doing harm to some. Especially is this true of the Home; for

there you who are the head, must find yourself the leader. Your views, your feelings, your habits, will necessarily stamp themselves upon all around; and, increasing every day, you will find your words and actions producing a harvest, which no after tears can wash away, even should you desire it.

Then, it is most important that the daily endeavor shall be to guide *oneself* aright; and, by personal earnestness, sincerity, and consistency, to give that tone to the Home which shall result in an organization suitable to serving God.

I suppose the outline of such an organization will be correctly traced, if I place family prayer, benediction of food, united and regular attendance upon the means of grace in the House of God, as the more noticeable points before my mind. These, certainly, are absolutely essential to the Truth of a Christian Home, and constitute the more evident of its distinctive features. No Home which lacks these, can be, I am persuaded, truly called a Christian one.

For, as I come to examine closer into the matter, I see that these acts make up the evidences of corporate unity. It is only by its associative character that we recognize a household at all. The tokens of a Home and its peculiarities are, in a corporate sense, that all are guided by one head—lodge beneath one roof—eat at the same board. A family is evidenced as such, when, at the

conclusion of day, they severally retire to rest beneath the same roof, or when, in the morning, they assemble to commence another day of mutual labor or enjoyment. It is, therefore, in the manner in which this is done, that the Christian stamp can be given. If the morning union or the night separation be a period unhallowed by any religious thought, unconsecrated by any sacred act—such a household is only a heathen or worldly one, with an unrecognized God, an unacknowledged King. It matters not what I may find individuals in that household doing or feeling. If I see many or most of them kneel, night and morning, in personal petition before their God, I cannot yet, for that, call such a *Christian* household. There may be Christians in it; but, as a family—in their corporate relation as a small community—there is no Divine Truth discernible; they are godless and unsanctified, possessing no religious character, and devoid of any distinct feature of Christian life.

I would, therefore, consider family prayer as the first great and unavoidable necessity to the true organization of a Home. Prayer to God night and morning of every day, irrespective of what are commonly called hindrances. Prayer once a week will not do; united prayer now and then will not accomplish it. The devotion must sanctify all the social relation, in its continuous action. It must be the fixed, invariable habit of the Home, one and all, to come before God, night and morning, as a household, to

acknowledge His mercy, to implore His blessing, and to ask His care. Excuses of business, or of conflicting claims, are nothing but excuses, and avoided as such; never being permitted to interrupt that solemn duty. By this means every day is in some sort hallowed and sanctified. The regular morning and evening devotion testifies that in that Home God is confessed—His name honored—His will sought. All belonging to it are thus accustomed to bring the thoughts as well as the deeds of each day before the Almighty King, and are necessarily reminded that their only object in life is, to serve their God—to glorify their Maker; and that their present Home is but a type of that to come—a resting-place for a little season, preparatory to an eternal rest.

But how shall this family devotion be conducted? By one or other of the heads of the household, unless the Church of God offer to the great family of her children the means of daily worship in the sanctuary. Either the father or mother, as the Providence of God shall direct, should assemble the members of the family, and lead the devotion of all, in their acknowledgment of God; and thus enable the younger portion of that community to grow up in the fixed habit and enjoyment of religious communion—of regular daily intercourse with God; and have clear, ever-present appreciation of their duty toward Him?

The next point which presents itself to my mind, as tending to the religious organization of the Home, is the

habit of invoking the Divine blessing upon food partaken. We are told by an Apostle, that whether we eat or drink, we are to do all to the glory of God; and among the associated acts of the household may be justly reckoned as prominent, assembling at stated periods to partake of common nourishment. At such time, I cannot understand how any truly Christian heart would forget the plain duty of recognizing the Hand from which he receives every mercy. I know I would turn away with displeasure from the greediness of a child, who should eagerly and thanklessly seek to devour what I might bestow upon him; and yet, are we not all "children of God, by faith in CHRIST JESUS?" * or is it not the fact, that by a Christian profession, we acknowledge our food to be as fully and directly the gift of God in His Providence, as though it were tendered in His Person? I am sure, while reflecting upon this, that it is a point of more importance than is generally supposed, and that it is too sadly neglected in so-called Christian Homes. I know very many heads of families, who are deeply in earnest in their religious profession, and yet wholly neglect this habit for their Homes. They erroneously suppose it something trifling or insignificant. It assuredly is not. Ingratitude is the basest of emotions for a Christian to permit; and such is the feeling nourished by an unacknowledged reception of food from God. For this cause, it is the sacred duty of the head of the

* Gal. iii 26

household, to keep up carefully the habit of blessing the food, by thanking God for its bestowal, and thus enable all the family, unitedly, to acknowledge that they believe and feel, that “of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things.”*

The third point which I determined to consider, as one of the greatest distinctions of the true Home, was the observance of the day of the Lord as a period of sacred rest, as well as spiritual growth; by attending upon the worship of the Sanctuary.

“Keeping Sunday,” as it is termed, is not at all what I have in my mind. I may find thousands of families who “keep Sunday,” to whom the great principle of the Christian household is yet one utterly strange. With these (and how easily I can point them out!) keeping Sunday is the necessary—the unavoidable cessation of their cares or their amusements, as the case may be. It is an imperative, but unwelcome, break in the career of their gains, the pursuit of their pleasures. Three powerful influences compel them to this result; and decency, habit, and fashion, lead them to require in their Homes, the observance of that day, as a cessation from their ordinary open prosecution of business, and, perhaps, even the attendance once a day upon some place of public worship. And yet, what is all the while the *feeling* of the household? Ah! have I not seen it too often? Have I not again and again

* Rom. xi. 36.

beheld the indubitable manifestation in that Home, of a kind of fretful, impatient idleness, pervading all ; wishing the day past, and yet not wishing, positively, to desecrate it—all the ordinary train of thought and feeling indulged—the conversation, the reading, the reflections being all of the same tone as marks the daily life. If you are domesticated there, you will hear all the topics of the daily business, planned and replanned ; children and parents discussing fully their ordinary avocations. If you drop in as a friend, the daily news—the fluctuations of business—the prospects of markets—the probabilities of times—are all canvassed as fully, and far more leisurely, than on week-days ; and hence the pervading atmosphere of such a Sunday-keeping Home is, notwithstanding, of the earth, earthy.

How different is this from the true Home which I am now seeking to make clear to myself. In it I would find the heads of the household delighting in the anticipation of the day of the LORD as a dear period of rest, type below of the Heaven above. They look upon that day as a sacred season of soul-delight. In their Home, with the closing in of the week-day night, are laid by all cares or anxieties which are of a purely worldly character. It is their delight to feel that, for *one* day, earth may be forgotten, and that their business toil may properly be thrust from their minds. This, they endeavor to do themselves, and to have done by others. Ordinary worldly topics

are avoided. Religious themes—the interests of the Church—the concerns of the House of God—the progress of the Gospel of Jesus—the growth in their own neighborhood, of the profession and practice of religion, afford the leading subjects of that day. If friends come in and introduce the topic of business and its claims, it is dropped as soon as possible, and more congenial subjects are introduced. Gladness and happiness beam on every face in the enjoyment of the truest rest that the soul can receive; and while every worldly care is determinately excluded—every sordid desire crushed—the place is supplied with other and sweeter objects of interest connected with the worship or service of God. Thus every member of that household is led to feel that the Lord's Day is a holy day—a day of rest and peace to soul and body.

Oh! how deeply do they err who suppose that their Home is a true and Christian one, because they “keep Sunday,” all the time running contrary to the plainest requisition. Those who allow themselves to make of the Sunday, a convenient time of business retrospect—who talk in their Homes, to their children as well as their neighbors, on the day of God, concerning all their week-time cares, and take that opportunity to discuss the prospects of their farm—their store—or their merchandize—thus permitting their Home to be polluted on that holy day with the earthly taint which God has forbidden.

It is by means, such as these, that the organization of

the Home can be religiously effected. Not that I suppose this to be all that is necessary to its full government as a religious community; but that I believe if these greater features are thus boldly presented as sacred Truths, all the lesser ones will fall into their proper manner, in their various ramifications. Any way I am sure, that if I in my Home fail to establish these greater principles of organization, as an agreement to the Divine Will, all my personal efforts will be next to worthless. I clearly see that if there is to be religious Truth in the Home, there *must* be a distinct character, a marked separation, between such a Home, and that which is purely a worldly one. This can be done only by making the ruling influence the *will of God*, and the standard of all habits and customs, the showing forth His glory. If, therefore, morning and evening, the sacrifice of prayer shall ascend unto the Majesty on High—if at every meal the goodness of the Giver be earnestly acknowledged—if each Sunday be truly set apart for God, and not a worldly thought encouraged to dwell in the hearts of its members, but the worship and praise of God be the delight of the day; then, indeed, I hesitate not to affirm—such a Home does possess the Truth of God—the stamp of His own will be fixed upon that household, and a great gulf set between its life and that of the worldly Home.

And here I see another point, the unavoidable conse-

quence of the former. Such a Home will never be defiled by the society, or the folly of the world. I know it is, to many persons—rightly meaning persons, too—a hard point to settle what society they shall encourage, what company keep. Indeed I have heard such persons say, that it was impossible, without rudeness and incivility, to prevent altogether the association with worldly and worthless persons. Here I see the answer. Such a course as I have just supposed to myself, would be a self-regulator to the associates of the Home. The cause of the trouble to the persons, whom I have in my mind, I very much suspect to be, want of Christian organization in their Home. If the true stamp were given to it as being God's own, the vain—the trifling—the giddy—the time-serving of earth would soon, of themselves, flee away. There would be no need of any offence or discourtesy to be shown to any brought in contact with their Home, even though worldly and irreligious in their character. The truest urbanity may be extended to them, and yet, if they were firm and consistent, in carrying out the Christian government of their Home—never hindered in presenting its distinctive features—it would be rendered so distasteful to the feelings of the worldly, that they would soon cease to mar its peace. There is no repulsion more real than that which exists between the deep, abiding, faith and love of CHRIST, and the love and relish of the world. As it was the lan-

guage of the demoniacs to JESUS,* “What have we to do with Thee?” so it is yet the language of the world, unto the true followers of JESUS; and I am persuaded, that whoever will be firm and consistent in carrying out the distinctive characteristics of the Christian Home—allow no associations, or no society to prevent the observance of God’s praise and glory, so will the company they keep, the society they enjoy, purge itself, and make itself fit and meet for the household of the children of God!

And blessed—blessed, I say to myself, as I look at this; thrice blessed, the Home where is shrined such religious Truth. How calm its life! How sweet its associations! How refined its love! Even were there no hope but in time, it were worthy of the cultivation. But when I consider Eternity—when I look forward to the white Throne, and Him that sitteth thereon—when I glance at the grave, and beyond the grave, the judgment—and after that, at the Home, which must be one of two, forever—oh! then—how blessed looks this picture—how precious this preparation for immortality!

“Holy Father!” I cry, with the earnest longing of an overfilled heart, “let *this* be the Truth of my Home! Give me the light to see, and the power to form such a sacred reality in that type of heaven which Thy Providence has placed in my grasp! Oh! may those loved

* Matth. viii. 29.

ones (whose voices are even now ringing in my ear) be partakers of this heavenly Truth ; and may they be so guided in Thy love and fear, that they may be able at last to say, "Blessed are the people who are in such case ; yea, blessed are the people who have the LORD for their God,*" for they are partakers of the Eternal Home !

* Psl. cxliv. 15.

SOLILOQUY IV.

CHILDREN OF THE HOME.

CHILDHOOD! Happy childhood! Pure childhood!—as far as actual guilt is concerned. What a joy and gladness to the parent's heart! How inexpressibly dear the young being unfolding at our side! Well, indeed, may it be said, "a babe in a house is a well-spring of joy;" and rarely do we find that its sparkling waters of delight are neglected or contemned.

And yet, I sometimes think, the possession is a fearful joy. It is not an untroubled gift. No blessing of this precarious earth is nearly so precarious as the blessing in a child. It may be the sweetest, purest joy that this world can know; and it may be the keenest anguish that the heart can bear. The bitterest tears I have ever seen shed have been those that a child had caused. In the gift of an infant, it well becomes a parent to rejoice only with trembling. Who knows what it is to be, O parent! Whether thy bitter woe, or thy great happiness, thou canst not tell; and whether it shall be thy lot to weep over it as a lost, ruined spirit, or to hail it as the brightest gem

among the jewels of God in the heavenly Home—this is only known to Him to whom the future is the past.

For this cause, I feel it is a fearful thing to be a parent, even on the selfish principle of looking only at my own comfort or happiness; it may so much affect my own after peace. But beyond this, when I come to look at the child—when I consider how greatly his well-doing and well-being lie bound up in my hand; and realize what a fearful responsibility rests upon me to secure for my child its eternal as well as temporal happiness; I hardly know whether to lament or rejoice that, in the Providence of God, I am thus a parent.

It must, therefore, be to me a point of deep solicitude, how I can bring the Truth of God to bear upon my child; for, as I feel that Truth can alone be to him the “way and the life,” I must hope and pray, and strive to train him up in the habits of a holy Home, by the inculcation of such Truth as may, from his first Home, fix the outline of his second, and be the guarantee of his third, for everlasting joy. How can this be done? What are the steps by which the Christian organization of my Home shall be brought to bear upon the personal life of my child, and the new life of his Baptismal covenant be so fostered and nurtured as to become a likeness of the heavenly child?

I must first remember that my child is, from myself, an inheritor of a nature vitiated and depraved. Dear, sweet, pure, as that little infant looks to my loving eye, I must not

forget that there lie hidden the seeds of evil and of sin. I must not yield to a blind affection, an overweening love, and think that all it may do will be good, and all it may be shall be right. Alas—no!—I must nerve myself to look for and expect development of sin. Let a man's *theory* be what it may concerning original sin, he cannot deny the existence and growth of decidedly disagreeable emotions in the childish breast. No parental fondness can hide, nor any love-blindness cover, the birth, growth, and maturing of resisting wills and contending passions, which *may* result in a foul depravity. Birth, rank, and position have no necessary connection with this. It is independent of all. The son of the prince *may* be as depraved as the son of the beggar at his door. Circumstances only rule by educational differences. The capability of such evil is in every heart; and thus sweet infancy is ever open to the danger of a blight. Doubtless, some more than others, inasmuch as by constitutional strength of will or animal passion, there is greater or less tendency toward the evil working of such tempers. Yet none are exempt, none wholly free; and wherever a parent can say that his child sometimes resists his will, or displays anger, or exhibits petulance; (and who must not?) *there* must a parent acknowledge the danger of depravity. Wherever a parent sees deceit, and combativeness, and destructiveness evinced; (and who does not?) *there* must the parent acknowledge the liability to an excess of that evil.

Hence I must not yield to a blind fondness, tempting me to think the best of all that may ensue, and dream that because it is *my* child, it is therefore likely to be happy or good. Believing that it is liable to error and to sin, I must feel that all I can do will be too little to expend in its training and guidance, and a solemn realization of my responsibility connected with it.

Here, then, I have brought home to me the importance of the paternal and maternal relation. It is a high and holy position. I, as a parent, am in the place of God to my child, and represent Him. The Almighty Father has seen fit to delegate to me the authority belonging to Himself; and I stand before my family in the same position that God stands to His Household, the Church. I am its head. My word, my will, my wish, become to it a law, even as God's word and will is a law unto His Church. As I think of this, how fearful does my position appear. I cannot see my charge and responsibility as the mere accident of the social relation, (which, indeed, so many seem to consider it)—one easily discharged and soon fulfilled. It is not so. My household and Home is given as an emblem of the spiritual household; and therefore my relation to the children under my care is a sacred one, and based upon a higher foundation than any mere social authority. God gives me to them to represent Him. They will and should look up to me as the pattern of the loveliest and the best; and they cannot but hang upon my word as the

sentence of their pleasures and their cares. Standing thus in the stead of God, oh! what justice, what Truth, what firmness should they see in me, that so, through me, they may be led up to the Almighty Father! Most assuredly; for with what face can a man tell his child of a Holy God, a Great Universal Father, who is to all men what he himself is to his child—and tell him also, that that God is holy, just, true, loving, merciful—when, at the same time, he, the earthly father, is not holy, nor just, nor true, nor loving? No, indeed; if I desire to lead my child unto a deep reverence for the Great Father, that reverence must, I feel assured, begin with me. The child must have the symbol which God has provided; and, through the excellence and integrity, the truth and love of his earthly father, be able to form some conception how greatly good, holy, and loving is the Father in heaven.

Nor is this solemn responsibility at all lightened, to any reflecting parent, when he considers how much of his children's future is positively committed as a solemn trust unto him. We do not think of this sufficiently. We are not apt, as parents, to face the truth, and see how plastic a material is placed in our hands. And yet, who does not know the facts of the case? We *know* that it is in our power to trifle with both the temporal and spiritual interests of our children; and that, in the ordinary course of Providence, a man may allow his child to grow up measurably, either a knave or a fool. Hence, to the parent is

given an awful charge! Immortal souls hang upon them for the obtaining of means which may work out their salvation, by teaching them the path which leads to that blessed result. So, too, is this charge peculiarly *their own*. None can take it up for them; to none can they make it over. No man can make agreement with others for their children. "It costs more to redeem their souls; so that they must let that alone forever."* I may, indeed, place my children under the care of others; I may secure for them good, faithful, able teachers; I may place them in schools which I believe to be well conducted; and yet, none of these can assume the fearful responsibility, to me, of guiding my children onward, in heart and mind, to their Heavenly Home. It will not suffice for me to turn them over to judicious instructors or prudent friends, and then, quietly folding my hands, to rest content. No. Upon *me* alone does God place the responsibility; and I only can bear it. Let me be content so to do, and be willing to watch and pray; hoping in my children's future, the exceeding great reward.

Well! After all this; believing that I am fully penetrated with the sense of the danger to my child and the duty of myself, what is the next step toward the government of my Home, in accordance with the will of God, and in resemblance to that Heavenly Home, of which I hope, one day, to become an inhabitant?

* Psalm, xlix. 7.

Obedience. Strict, uncompromising, constant obedience, I must make the foundation of my Home.

In Heaven—the will of God is perfectly done. The angelic beings, in their beautiful order, do alway and instantly wait upon His commands. So likewise does He intend that it shall be upon earth, and He demands of His children, a full implicit obedience. It is not enough that we recognize God to be our Father; we must *obey* Him, and so He teaches us to pray for His Church, that it may do His will here, with a resemblance to that obedience in which His will is done in Heaven. If such be the character of the Household of God, like it must be the character of my Christian Home. I must require, and I must enforce an obedience ready and implicit. My child must learn to renounce his own will; he must learn to yield and submit, and in every case I must enforce such submission.

I cannot forget that I am a Christian, setting before myself Jesus, the Way, Truth, and Life, and only seeking for my child a place and fitness for the Heavenly-Home, and that, like the mother of Zebedee's children, all I ask is, that my children be partakers of CHRIST's Heavenly Kingdom. Therefore, I must do everything possible for their spiritual good, and with a single eye to that. Now, it may be a great deal easier—it *is* a great deal easier—to allow a child to take his own way, and to offer no opposition or remonstrance; but it is not *right*. I know, as my children

grow older, and come to act for themselves, if they are to be children of God, they must learn to give up their own will, to renounce self, to submit their wishes unto the will of their God; and knowing this, I am bound to teach them, at the earliest hour, such subjection, in order that they may learn, through the earthly, to attain the Heavenly; gaining, by obedience to their earthly parents in their youth, such a submissive—yielding—self-renouncing temper, as can alone make them in advanced years, like little children in the Kingdom of God.

The obedience, therefore, which I shall exact from my child, must be a thorough obedience, unto me, *as his parent*. Because I am, what I am to him, *i. e.*, one standing in the stead of God. I wish him to learn to obey me under the consciousness that, in so doing, he obeys the Great Father above. I would have him learn (as soon as may be) that in ready and glad submission to my commands, he really gives honor unto his Father in Heaven, and that just such obedience as that Father requires of me, I must require of him; and that, in learning to yield unto me, simply because it is my will, he can best learn (and by the most happy training) that suppleness of will, fitting him to become a Child of God.

Here it is, I see, that the majority of even Christian parents are apt to fail, and lose the Truth of the Christian Home. They are apt to make this point one of mere feeling. If disobedience occasions annoyance or inconve-

nience, then it is very sharply rebuked ; sometimes very severely punished. Yet, perhaps, an hundred times, where disobedience is *not* an *inconvenience*, or does not personally annoy them, it may go on unrebuked, even unremarked. In many things where their command is issued, or their prohibition uttered, they do not concern themselves to see whether or not they are obeyed. Such a course cannot be in agreement with the solemn duty binding upon a parent, spiritually considered. Such a household possesses not the Truth of the Heavenly One. The parent must make this obedience a matter of duty to himself, as well as the child ; and labor, by frequent and earnest teachings, to impress upon the mind of his child, that in order to become obedient to God, it is necessary that he should first learn obedience to his earthly parent ; thus following the example of CHRIST.*

This leads me necessarily to the next point in the government of the true Home, being one naturally suggested by that which I have just been considering ; and that is, the principle of *Faith*, to be there cultivated. I know that it does not much look as though this could be operative, temporally ; and yet when we remember that Faith is the most important bond of union in the Household of God, and that we are told, that without "Faith, it is impossible to please Him,"† we may be sure that there is some place for it in the Home.

* Heb. v. 8.

† Heb. xi. 6.

The Faith, then, which I look for in my children, is such trust and reliance upon my word, as shall lead to that unquestioning obedience which I desire. It is the true origin of that virtue. My children must be taught to rely entirely upon my direction or assertion. What I think best, they must learn to believe so; what I judge right, they must desire to embrace. To trust my love and justice—kindness and wisdom, unwaveringly, and without delay. Not to reason upon my commands, or seek cause in my directions. Now it oftentimes happens that a quick-minded child may demand reason or cause, for such and such a command, or else may show hesitation and distrust regarding the father's care and kindness; and, it often happens, too, that parents are pleased with such indications of quickness of intellect, and by yielding to such demands, and showing cause, giving reason, they undermine the principle of Faith toward themselves, in their children. Such parents may be sure that the hesitating, carping child will make the headstrong, disobedient youth, and, finally (but for some interposition of Divine mercy) the Atheistical and rebellious adult.

But is this right? Am not I mistaken—and am not I going too far, making a mere machine of my child—a mental slave of its moral being? Is its reason, or its understanding, never to be satisfied? That would, indeed, be a mistake. If I failed in such cultivation of the intellect, I should be, indeed, at fault. I may, and even must,

often show my children the *reason* of their obedience. After I have *secured* the prompt submission of the will, then enlighten the understanding; with affection and patience point out how much better for their comfort the acts which I direct, have proved, and show in all its force the reason, which led me to what I commanded. This occasionally done, with judicious guidance, will strengthen the principle of trusting Faith at the issuing of the command, as being a full, trusting, while yet intellectual obedience.

Neither will it be sufficient for me to rest here, and content with having obtained for myself a yielding Faith, to carry it no further. I ought to strive vigorously to a spiritual bearing. Forasmuch as I, by my profession, declare I walk "by Faith, and not by sight," so must I labor to train my household to do. I must instruct them to "set their affections on things above." By the help of the Holy Spirit of God, I must impress upon their minds the supreme importance of spiritual above temporal concerns, and the fearful loss they would sustain, should they "gain the whole world and lose their own souls."* I must teach them (that lesson, alas! so hard to the natural heart) to "count all things but loss, so that they may win CHRIST, and be found in Him."† Above all, I must watch that my example may run along with my precept, and that they may see that I myself do really live by "Faith of the

* Matt. xvi. 26.

† Phil. iii. 8.

Son of God,"* and "looking for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God."†

Oh! my heart, look well at this solemn duty! Oh! my soul, consider prayerfully this sacred charge, as solemn to me as was the charge given to the leader of the Children of Israel. "See that thou make all things according to the pattern showed thee in the Mount."‡ Thus am *I* bound to make my household a resemblance unto the Heavenly Jerusalem; and pattern my family according to the order of those inheriting the holy mountain of the LORD. And as I see, with so sure a prescience, the temptations of the world spread out before them, and all the pleasures and cares which will assail their hearts, together with the insidious efforts of their adversary to occupy their souls with earth, and give it the first place—oh! how earnestly must I cry to my God for strength to combat all of these, for them; and teach them, as the wise man so beautifully expresses it; "first of all to know the LORD and fear Him, for the love of the LORD passeth all things for illumination, and the fear of Him is the beginning of His love, and Faith is the beginning of cleaving unto Him."§

After Faith, cometh Love, as necessary to be cultivated among the children of a Christian Home.

Much may be said of this pervading spirit, the beauty and glory of any Home, even in its lower, sensuous mani-

* Gal. ii. 20.

† Heb. xi. 10.

‡ Heb. viii. 5.

§ Eccl. xxv. 11.

festation, as the paternal instinct, or the refinement of a sentiment. How much more may be said of that holy influence resting upon the earthly household, which is patterned after the heavenly; and, where the love of God is the union and bond, how great shall be its peace!

To obtain the true happiness of the Home, such love must be encouraged. The affection of the parent for the child must be no merely selfish instinct, as viewing *self* in *them*; but they must be loved because their interests are dear to the heart. They must be loved for God's sake, and to His praise; and the tenderness which they receive must spring from that holy fountain of all love in the heart—the love of God there shed abroad.

Hence I must endeavor to promote the spirit of that love among my children. Not content with what may be termed a natural affection, I must seek to establish among them a closer bond of union, in the love of God knitting together their feelings and affections. To effect this, the habit of censoriousness and fault-finding must be discouraged; all bitter speaking, all raillery and ridicule must be broken up. Harshness of manner, rudeness of speech or of action, I must seek to banish. The tongue of sarcasm and the spirit of bitterness, I must be on the watch to destroy. Every act of kindness, however small; every token of thoughtful affection, even in trifling things, I must prompt and praise; and thus lead all to feel that the sweetest labor in which they can engage is the labor of

love—the work of an out-going affection; and, as a help to all this, must I lend the influence of my *own* example. My children should be able to see in me the effect of this holy love. They ought to be able to perceive how the love of God sanctifies and softens my heart; and that, consequently, fault-finding, tale-bearing, evil accusations, have no place in me. Even just and worthy blame of others I should avoid before them; more especially any unkind or uncharitable tone of remark concerning neighbors, acquaintances, or relations. Yes; I must first truly be filled with the holy love myself, ere I can successfully teach it to my children; and, forasmuch as I stand to them as the representative of God, my gentleness, patience, and love, must, like His, in a degree, be a pattern unto them. I must daily tread in my Saviour's steps, that so, setting Him forward in my Home, all jarring and strife, all bickering and disputing, all wrath and malice, may be effectually excluded, and the spirit of a holy love bind all in the bond of peace.

Alas! in this I find no inconsiderable difficulty. Upon this rock how many fair intentions have been shipwrecked! Many a parent, meaning rightly by his children, and acting rightly in their guidance, has yet overthrown all by want of consistency in his or her own religious character. I have seen it, oft and o'er again. While their precepts were wise and good, and their injunction befitting the happiness of the Home, their personal religion fell short of that mark, and they allowed in themselves many inconsistencies be-

tween their profession and their practice. This did not escape the eager eyes of the Home circle. None are so quick to detect such inconsistencies as the young, for the cause that they are not yet blinded by the illusory maxims of the world. Can I wonder, then, that these children grew up hearing the precepts, but following the opposite example? When they saw those whom they knew to have renounced the world by profession, and dedicated themselves to the service of God, and declared that they sought only the things above: when, I say, they saw these absorbed in business—anxious, careful, money-loving, and occupied wholly with the things of the world; can I wonder that, secretly, they despised the profession and censured the practice—casting to the winds all the holy teaching which they may have received? Oh, no! When they beheld their parents always ready to give the first place to their temporal interests, and for it neglecting evident religious duty, how could they place any confidence in their assertion, that they gave themselves up to the service of God, and that they desired their children to make such their habit? Children cannot be so easily deceived. Their elders we may blind by the habits of the world, or the trammels of custom, in which they have, like ourselves, become involved; but not so with the young. They make no allowances for circumstances; they form no deductions for what may be convenient and pleasant. If we are inconsistent, they *will* see it, and despise both the profession

and its professors. First then, above and beyond all other things, must I seek sincerity and consistency of religious life in my own person, if I hope to bring it before my children ; and Faith, Love, and Truth exemplify to them in myself, by deed as well as word.

Another point worthy of consideration, in viewing the way by which I may bring my children to the Truth of a holy Home, is the necessity of a habit of close and affectionate *familiarity* with them.

I know that perhaps it might seem strange to some, if I were to urge this. Who, they would answer, is not in such habit? And yet I really do not think it common ; not what I had in mind when I used the word, familiarity, I am very sure. How often it is, that parents who believe themselves faithful and loving—aye, *familiar* with their children, are almost strangers to their hearts and minds. Not strangers *in* them, but strangers *to* them. They have possession, but not knowledge. They are ignorant of half that transpires in these young souls. Necessarily? No! Intentionally? No! Thoughtlessly? Yes!—very sadly and thoughtlessly.

It is the duty and necessity of a parent, if he hopes the well-being of his offspring, to ponder over, examine, and study, the mental, moral and spiritual growth of his child ; to observe the effect of daily circumstances upon the young heart ; to notice the result of all associations and occupations upon the young mind. Everything should be

carefully weighed; the slightest indications painfully considered. It is only in the tendency of the emotions, feelings, and passions, that the progress of soul-life can be understood; and to reach this, a close and intimate relation must be sustained. For its healthy growth and development, a child requires a full-toned sympathy from its parent—an identification of its will and desire with theirs—a conformation of its emotions and feelings to theirs. It needs the constant promptings of a watchful parent's mind, in its spirit-life, while all the passions or workings of its young bosom must be sought out with as careful a hand, watched with as anxious an eye, as though they were to be the positive and entire creation of the parent's will. The tender germinating leaves of the mind must be so gently laid and directed—the fresh, clasping tendrils of the heart must be so softly and slowly twined around holy Truth, that it will require many months and years of unceasing care to reach such familiarity. The parent must labor with skilful tenderness to become the child's dearest companion and guide—the repository of its most hidden wishes—the source of all its purest pleasures. Sympathy, association, appreciation, must be poured out upon it, in order to gain its confidence and unburdening affection.

I feel assured, therefore, that, to establish this intimate relation between my children and myself will be the only way to guide them into Truth. I must gather them to my heart, and tell them much of the blessed love of God; and,

by confidence in this, gain their confidence in return. I must let them have a continual consciousness that my eye is upon them, and that their religious thoughts and feelings are the subjects of my constant, attentive, but loving consideration. By my tender manner lead them to speak of their religious emotions, trials, or temptations ; that so they may frequently come to me as their adviser and best friend, and delight in this way to speak with me. I must not seal my lips to the name of God. I must not shut out from all my conversation my holy profession ; but rather hold it up as the sweetest topic that my Home can know ; and hence exhibit to them, in the most beautiful coloring, the Truth as it is in Jesus, as their way and their life. By this means I may hope to have their hearts laid open to my view, and their thoughts or desires to be able to read in the glance of an eye. The first risings of temptation or perversity, I will be thus enabled, through God's grace, to perceive and overthrow ; and out of the sweet garden of my Home, to keep plucked the evil weeds of worldliness, selfishness, or disobedience. Nor must I forget, in this consideration, the great importance of seeking the presence of CHRIST as an abiding friend,* to sanctify this intimate relation of my Home. Prayer, earnest and frequent, must ascend from its altar. Not only must I pray *with* my children, in the family devotion ; but I must pray *for* them. My whole soul must be poured out, in earnest peti-

* Luke, xxiv. 29.

tion to my God and Saviour, that I and mine may be kept unspotted from the world ; and, imitating the example of my Redeemer, with deep travail of soul, intercede for those whom He has given me out of the world, that they may be kept in His name. I need not be ashamed of the sometime tear which drops from my uplifted eye ; nor need I consider it a wild enthusiasm prompting the sometime sob wringing my bosom. If I feel *all* my responsibility, and *all* my duty, it can hardly be otherwise ; neither should I wish it to be so.

And have I now completed all which I intended to consider ? Nearly. There are, indeed, many other lesser points which might be largely insisted upon, and which I must keep before my mind with a holy carefulness ; and yet I think I have now pondered upon all which, in general outline, can give the character of religious Truth to the Home. At least, all but one—for one still remains for me to examine, not perhaps as a special point, but rather as a spirit and influence resting upon the whole : I mean, the duty of enforcing upon my children a regular observance of all the appointments of the great pattern of the household, the Church of God ; and a constant, unhesitating obedience of all her directions.

To this effect, I must teach them to regard any religious duty which she sets before them as paramount to all other. They must obtain the feeling, that pleasure, amusement, or

care, should all be set aside at her direction ; and that the worship and service of God, whenever His Bride, the Church, shall call, should be made their first delight ; not simply on the Day of the Lord, but on other days of the week. By example and precept, I must induce them to realize how, by stealing away from the world, for intercourse with God, whether in the closet or the sanctuary, we thus live above the world, and are strengthened against temptation, and prepared for trial. I desire, therefore, to infix an early love of Divine worship ; to place it before their minds as the highest privilege which they can enjoy this side the grave, and the nearest approach to heaven which earth can afford. Therefore, I would have them learn to *make efforts* for its attainment ; make self-denial often, to secure its privileges at other days besides the Day of the Lord.

And then I would bring them up in a very reverent estimation of their Baptismal Covenant, and their federal connection with the great Family of God. I should frequently talk with them respecting this, their new birth into the spiritual world ; endeavoring to impress upon their minds the greatness of the blessings to which they are by it made inheritors. I would remind them, that they are not strangers from the commonwealth of Israel, aliens from the promise ; but that really they have, by Baptism, put on CHRIST,* and so belong to Him. Therefore, I would

* Gal. iii. 27.

urge, how careful they should be to walk answerably to their Christian calling, and as becometh children of God I would put it to them, as they grow older, how they could hope to receive the blessing of CHRIST, if, as members of His Church, they did not humbly, faithfully, steadily obey Him.

Then, too, I would keep constantly in their view that future to which I hope and expect they would come—admission to the blessed Feast of the Bread of Truth, the body and blood of CHRIST ; that time when they should for themselves have assumed the fulness of their Baptismal pledge. I would hold this before them from tenderest age, as a bright and blessed event, to be looked forward to with all the longing of their young hearts. I would encourage them to talk of that happy time when they should be old enough and prepared enough, to partake in faith the heavenly food : that, like as worldly parents hold before their children, and lead them to expect with anxious eagerness the time when they may emerge from seclusion into the gaiety of the world, and enter upon business, or engage in life, or undertake matrimony,—so, my children may learn as heavenly children, to look forward to that period when they shall emerge from the protecting care of a parent's responsibility, and, in the fulness of Christian life, enter upon the struggle of JESUS' warfare, and partake all the precious joys of the soul's nourishment, and be

entirely married unto CHRIST.* Doing thus, I would hope, that, when that time arrived, I could, with a deeply thankful glow of heart, offer them unto GOD as willing and anxious servants ; and, with spirits unpolluted by the world, render them up into full union with CHRIST, at the wedding feast, as chaste souls† for His inhabitation.

Oh, happy hour ! and happy, happy parent shall I then become ! Blessed, indeed, in my Home ! Blessed, thrice blessed in my heart ! Truth, then, will reign in all ; and the peace of heaven shine through that Truth. Happy day shall that be, when I so give them up, in soul pure and true, unto CHRIST. Happy beyond any other day, except only one—which, if the mysterious Providence of GOD shall call me to behold, shall yet, through the rainbow of bitter tears, display the beams of the Sun of Righteousness,—I mean, the day when I may, perhaps, be called upon to give them up unto the last heavenly Home ; they, in advance of me, entering on a third, without any trial of a second. Oh ! if I bend over the dying bed of a darling child, and with bleeding heart see reft away from my side the sweet one fast dawning into maturity ; still, even then, happy shall I be in that dark hour, to feel and *know* that I yield them up to wait for that Eternal Home, fitted in spirit by the preparation of a true earthly one ; and that they, in body, heart, and mind, *have* learned to lean upon

* Rom. vii. 4.

† 2 Cor. ii. 2.

their God ; and that, consecrated unto Him on earth—growing into that life of CHRIST—when He cometh to “bring the sheep of the other fold” “where He is, they shall be also.”* Sweet comfort, then, will it be, and balm more precious than that of Gilead, to my wounded heart !

Or if—which I hope His Providence may provide—I am called to lie upon a dying bed before that day ; and hearing by my side the sweet words of an undying affection, having gathered to my view the circle of my loved Home ; hands ministering to my wants, quickened by a sanctified affection ; oh ! then, happy will it be to feel at that dread hour, while the world trembles in mine eye, and the faces of my children turn to darkness in my vision : happy, then, to be able to look upward and cry, (with humble trust in Him who first uttered these words) “While I was with them, I kept them in Thy name. Holy Father, keep, through Thy own name, those which thou hast given me ; *for they are Thine !*”†

Is it a dream ? Has it come ? or, is it past ? No : the tears I still feel wet upon my cheek, and the breath comes thickly in my breast. I had almost thought that hour had been reached—the bitterness of death past ; but it is not so. I still hear the voices of my children echoing sweetly in my ear ; and still I see the swinging of the locust boughs over the white-topped graves. Ah ! many a weary

* John, x. 16 ; and xiv. 3.

† John, xvii. 9, 11, 12.

day, and, perhaps, long year, must pass, ere that happy hour shall come, when I render up my charge, and lay me down to rest, waiting for my Eternal Home. Oh! shall I be faithful through it all? Shall I, indeed, bring these my children through a true Home on earth, to the Truth of Home in heaven? I know not now; but I will *believe*. To Thee, and with Thee, oh, my God, will I labor; and do Thou give the increase; for fully do I feel and know "*without Thee, I can do nothing.*"*

* John, xv. 5.

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